

Elementary English

THE WORK OF MARY NORTON
READING ACHIEVEMENT—THEN AND NOW
CHILDREN NEED TO WRITE
STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL RESEARCH

ORGAN OF THE
NATIONAL
COUNCIL
OF
TEACHERS
OF
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FEBRUARY,
1956



From Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*

Elementary ENGLISH

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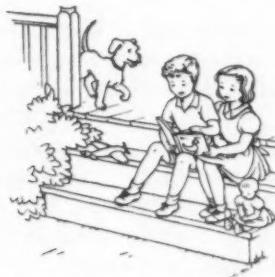
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By Way of Introduction . . .

MARY HARBAGE, who is director of elementary education in a large city, has not allowed her heavy schedule of administrative duties to interfere with her love and study of children's literature. We especially appreciate her willingness to do the article about Mary Norton on short notice. It is thoughtful, informative, and inspirational.

Many people accept uncritically the results of anything that passes for educational research. In this issue Professor E. W. DOLCH expounds the elementary principles of sound school research in reading. The discussion is valuable both for those who plan studies and for those who read the reports. We need more good research in reading.

MILDRED DAWSON quite properly stresses the importance of writing, and the need for children to want to write and to have concrete purposes for writing. Dr. Dawson's most recent professional book is *Teaching Language in the Grades*.

Miss MARGARET S. DIXON, who describes an experience in developing reading interest in a child, supplements her diversified professional activities with the writing of poetry.

Many elementary school teachers of the language arts are called upon to teach science also. EDWARD MAST gives helpful suggestions relating to vocabulary problems in science.

MARY E. COBER is author of *The Remarkable History of Tony Beaver, West Virginian*, a number of children's stories, and professional articles. She has her master's degree from Syracuse University.

New evidence about the performance of schools in the teaching of reading is always welcome. The Miller-Lanton article reports impressive data concerning the improved results achieved. Mrs. VERA MILLER is a specialist in psychology and author of a number of professional articles and research studies. Dr. WENDELL C. LANTON, whose Ph.D. dissertation dealt with the topic of the present article, was formerly a teacher in the Foster School, Evanston, Illinois.

ROBERT LEESTMA has compiled a comprehensive directory of the commercially-produced audio-visual materials that are useful in the teaching of reading. It is available at Slater's Book Store, 336 S. State St., Ann Arbor, Michigan, for \$1.50 postpaid.

Administrators and teachers are constantly seeking new ideas and new plans for the improvement of the reading of all pupils. WALTER B. BARBE and TINA S. WATERHOUSE in this issue suggest one method that appears to have been successful. As the authors point out, one of its chief values is the emphasis it has placed on reading instruction in the upper grades.

Modern teachers will be amused by the content of some of the school readers used years ago. THOMAS P. GLEASON describes one such in his article on the National Fourth Reader. It no doubt served a useful purpose in its day.

DEVONA M. PRICE describes some practical applications of grammatical principles to the needs of everyday life. She invites parents to participate in the process of teaching these applications.

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

XXXIII

FEBRUARY, 1956

No. 2

MARY HARBAGE

The Borrowers at Home and Afield

It is my "crustimoney proceedcake" (as Pooh would say) to glance through the new books as they arrive from the various publishing houses and to hastily stack in what eventually becomes the order of their reading. Those which, on first glance, seem to be "all writing and no talking," whose authors I do not already know or whose jackets and illustrations extend no special enticement are apt to be relegated to the lower half of the "to be read" stack. This is not, of course, an infallible way of giving best new titles the first reading time, but on the whole it seems to work and no good book is irrevocably lost—the worst that can happen is that it may remain buried for several months.

As the new titles arrived from Harcourt-Brace in the fall of '53, I did my usual hurried shuffling, sliding this one near the top and that one a bit lower. I stopped when I came upon an interesting title, *The Borrowers*, with what was, to me, a new author, Mary Norton. The jacket showed three quaintly dressed peo-

ple amid a jumble of things—the whole effect was one of intriguing disproportion, for the things (a spool, pencil, acorn, thimble) were too large for the people. A quick leafing through the pages from back to front (again a personal "proceedcake") convinced me that there was much in the way of conversation and that the illustrations were excellent. Still undecided as to when it might best be read, I scanned the first page. Two bits of writing, and the decision was made for me.

Now breakfast rooms are all right in the morning when the sun streams in on toast and marmalade, but by afternoon they seem to vanish a little and to fill with a strange silvery light, their own twilight.¹

Without knowing just how it had happened, I was suddenly remembering the tangy marmalade, crisp toast, and friendly sunshine in the breakfast room at Wacton House in Norfolk County. Could this be a British story?

A bit further down the page, I learned that Mrs. May had taught a little girl named Kate many things—among others,

Miss Mary Harbage is Director of Elementary Education in Akron, Ohio.



Mary Norton

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 3.

how to tidy a drawer and to lay, like a blessing, above the contents, a sheet of rustling tissue against the dust.¹

I read it, enjoyed it, gave it as a gift to friends, talked about it, found some boys and girls to listen to it—and all the time I



Borrowers Afield

The decision was made. I placed *The Borrowers* not within the stack of books, but on top of my purse and under my car keys, which meant "to be read tonight."

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 3.

knew that I was waiting for something more.

This fall, another story of Homily, Arrietty, and Pod (the borrowing family) arrived—and on such an inopportune day! I took in the significance of the too full



Borrowers Afield

desk calendar in one glance, dismissed a faint hope that a sudden illness might send me home for the day and after one free hour spent steadily reading *The Borrowers Afield* had to sandwich in a few more pages between meetings, conferences, and visits. I reverted to childhood pattern of going from task to task with one finger (mentally) marking my place in the book. And now that I've finished *The Borrowers Afield*, I find that again I am waiting, but at least I'm not waiting alone. The thousands of readers, well scattered between the ages of ten and eighty, to whom borrowers have become real, are waiting with me.

Recognition for *The Borrowers*

It is not always the case that unusual juvenile titles are recognized as being of fine quality and gain a deserved place in children's literature as quickly as these two books of Mary Norton's have assumed theirs. *The Borrowers* was first published in England by Dents and received the Carnegie Medal for the best British book of

1952. A year later, after being published in this country by Harcourt-Brace, it was named as A Distinguished Book of 1953 by the American Library Association. As far as the sale of copies is concerned, this title competes well with some of the adult fiction on the national best seller's list.

The reviewers as they considered the book sought out phrases such as, "a rare undrept-of-find" (Mary Crashie), "A memorable piece of writing for children" (*The New Yorker*), "The most satisfying read aloud book of the season" (Sterling North, *World Telegram and Sun*), "a rare and delicious addition to children's literature" (*Louisville Courier Journal*), and "As by a fresh breeze in a world of stern reality the reader is caught up in a miniature world of fantasy" (Helen M. Brogan, *Library Journal*). Comments about *The Borrowers* even appeared in *Vogue* and *Mademoiselle*. And I do not consider *The Borrowers Afield* as just a sequel—it is part and parcel of the first book and all that has been said appreciatively about the one can be applied to the other.

Borrowers and Borrowing

Now if you should be wondering just who borrowers are, let me ask you some questions. Why are you always replacing safety pins, buying additional packets of needles, losing track of match boxes, and mislaying handkerchiefs? The answer is quite a simple one—there are borrowers in your house—people just like "human beans" in almost every way, excepting that they are very small and that they borrow from their giant-sized counterparts (in other words, us) to take care of all of the necessities and luxuries of living. Thus, for



From *The Borrowers*

them, a fly swatter becomes a door, safety pins make excellent coat hangers, stamps are hung as portraits on the walls (Queen Victoria, every one!), match boxes are stacked to make a chest of drawers, coins serve as plates (a silver service, no less), hankies make lovely smooth sheets, and half of a soap box is a trustworthy boat. But of all the borrowings, the tools of the trade are most important—borrowing bags to hold the "take" and the long pins with name tapes attached to be used when scaling extreme heights.

I realize that matter-of-fact folks are beginning to shake their heads a bit at this

point. Let the same Mrs. May give all of us, as well as Kate, a bit of advice:

Keep your sense of wonder child and don't be so literal. Anything we haven't experienced for ourselves sounds like a story.¹

But if the whole idea still seems too utterly fantastic, be assured that Mrs. Norton is one of those artists who weaves into her stories such minute and satisfying detail, who develops her books so consistently and who makes her characters so much a piece of the people we meet every day that the engrossed reader "believes"—well, at least believes while engrossed. In fact, some readers are almost irritated while reading *The Borrowers* to have the author leave the way open for doubters to wonder whether this "might have happened." 'Tis something of a relief, as the borrowers are later forced afield, to have everyone, author included, assuming the realness of the situation.

In an article which Mrs. Norton wrote for *Woman's Day* (June, 1954), she mentions that some authors

lack the spark which turns the simplest home-spun story into magic or makes the wildest flights of fantasy seem real.

Of this particular kind of creative spark, Mrs. Norton has an abundance.

And, Beth and Joe Krush have aided and abetted her skillfully in making these two books factual-fantasy. Their illustrations invite one to study as well as to look. Again, we find a multiplicity of every-day detail combined with the enchantment of "it can't quite be true." The pictures of the family at home, Rosa Pickhatchet

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers Afield*, Harcourt-Brace, 1955, p. 8.



Borrowers Afield

dusting Uncle Hendreary along with the ornaments on the mantel, Arrietty talking to the boy—these and others are turned to again and again.

The Family

Now borrowers take as their family name the part of the house wherein they live. After all, they have to take everything—so why not borrow a name. In the books, we meet The Overmantels (a rather stuck-up lot); The Broom Cupboard Boys; The Rain Pipes; The Bell Pulls; The Harpsicords; and The Clocks, Homily, Arrietty, and Pod; so known because the entrance to their under-the-floor home is hidden beneath the grandfather clock. As Arrietty ventures into the main hall of the house for the first time, she thinks

Their clock . . . after which her family was named! For two hundred years it had stood here, deep voiced and patient, guarding their threshold and measuring their times.¹

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 61.

The Clock family, related to the Harpsicords by marriage, live alone in the big house (that is, if you don't count the "human beans"), for all of the other borrowing families have been "seen" and thus have had to emigrate. Upon Pod, the husband and the father, fall the responsibilities of adequately borrowing for his family. Homily is the eternal wife, mother, housekeeper, cook, and worrier. And Arrietty, their daughter, is the joy and delight as well as the chief concern of her parents.

Homily, perhaps because she is part and parcel of so many good souls in this world, is the first to emerge as a real character. Bustling, talkative, worrisome, a bit tart and something of a gossip, Homily has to be admonished now and then by her family not to "take on." Taking on is apt to occur when her nerves are "all of a piece." As the situation calls for it, Homily can become, in turn, the stricken martyr or the courageous helpmate, and when there is need she can be completely winning. (After all, it takes some special effort to get Pod to change his deliberate British mind.) Both Pod and Arrietty realize that Homily is truly a wonderful woman and when "put to it" can face up to any situation.

It is so easy to visualize an angry Homily seizing the broom to work off her ruffled feelings, to understand how she almost becomes "house proud" when borrowing is suddenly too easy, and to sense her indignation when she is caught with her hair up in curlers and the supper washing-up not yet done. Something within the understanding reader pauses to smile, as Homily pushes back her untidy hair and smooths down her apron when she hears Pod returning. And, there is al-

most an ache for her when, out of doors for the first time, she sees a flower.

She stopped and picked it by its hair-thin stalk.

"Isn't it lovely?" she said in a tender voice; touching the fragile petals with a work-worn finger, she tucked it into the opening of her blouse.¹

Homily's life is made up of love, work, and worry, and to the living of it she brings real wisdom. As for all of us, so with Homily, little things help; in fact, there's nothing like a cup of tea to brighten her up. And, when faced with having to go back to drinking her tea from a common acron cup she does so cheerful, even as he mourns for lost riches and remembers, "But it's once you've *had* a teacup, if you see what I mean."²

Pod, with his round currant-bunny sort of look and his John Bull stance and build, emerges more slowly as a person. But then one can expect little else, for Pod would be inconsistent if he was anything other than deliberate. Like most men, he does not come into his own, as it were, in everyday home life. But when an emergency arises, thank goodness he is at hand to take charge . . . and the most dreaded of all emergencies comes as the Clocks are not only "seen" but are hunted and forced to emigrate. Pod is a bulwark of strength, utterly practical and completely stubborn. Because he has been out in the world (the place of Victorian borrowing ladies is definitely in the home), he knows something of the dangers and vicissitudes his

family must meet as they start out to try to find Uncle Hendreary, Aunt Lupy, and another home.

Now Homily may, at times, enveigle Pod into moving the furniture from room to room by the hour, but he *is* the man of the house, the undisputed master, when the well-being of his family is threatened. When Homily starts to moan, a quick and firm "Have done" from Pod is enough to set her aright and "We want none of that now" can stem an imminent flow of tears. Pod may be a bit stolid and ponderous in his thinking, but none can doubt his courage nor his practicality. Many a psychiatrist, dealing with a neurotic patient could well quote him—

In this life . . . you got to see what *is*, as you might say and then face up to what you wish there wasn't.¹

Those who, when they feel cooped-up, hemmed-in, and lonely, frequently go from window to window seeking some escape, will recognize in Arriety a kindred spirit. Her family has tried in many ways to keep her happy and contented. She has a charming room. The ladies on the cigar box lid, which makes its ceiling, are delightful to look at while she falls asleep at night and Homily tries to keep her busy all through the day. Arriety has been taught to read and write and Pod has borrowed Tom Thumb editions for her bookshelf as well as a Diary and Proverb Book. By writing just one line each evening, Arriety hopes to make the diary last at least twenty years.

But the events of the day are too often recorded simply by making ditto marks and lonely Arriety turns longingly to—

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers Afield*, Harcourt-Brace, 1955, p. 75.

²Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 24.

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers Afield*, Harcourt-Brace, 1955, p. 158.

ward the grating through which she can glimpse a "bit of path, a few flowers and once in a while a bird flying by."

Oh, to be out of doors . . . to lie in the sun . . . to run in the grass . . . to swing in the twigs like the birds do.¹

Homily finally realizes that Arrietty must explore a wider world for she can't stand being "cooped-up . . . day after day . . . year after year . . ." So Pod takes her through the hall of the big house, to the out of doors, and there Arrietty dances joyously into adventure . . . is "seen" and even talks to the boy. This, of course, finally leads to the emigration and though Homily never ceases to bewail her lost treasures, and Pod faces many a problem, Arrietty is always glad that they have escaped—glad "no matter what."

And so, you come to picture Arrietty as a part of joyous and adventurous youth. She is dainty, but proves her durability as she adjusts easily to new and complex ways of life. She is at times fearful, but curiosity often overcomes caution.

The Author

To quote from the book jacket of *The Borrowers* seems the best way to sketch in the facts of the author's life.

"Mary Norton's first love was the theatre, and in the days of Lilian Baylis she was a member of the "Old Vic" Shakespeare Company. She gave up acting, however, upon her marriage with Robert C. Norton, whose family—ship-owners—had been residents in Portugal since the end of the Napoleonic wars. There, where her home was in the depths of the country and rather isolated by bad roads, she began to write. There, too, her children—two

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 36.

boys and two girls—were born. For the last ten years Mrs. Norton has lived in a little eighteenth century house in the Chelsea district of London. She still acts occasionally but spends more time with her writing—for the theatre and radio as well as for the children."

And, much is revealed about the author in her letter written to boys and girls in this country and used on Ruth Harshaw's program, "A Carnival of Books."

Dear Children,

Suddenly I feel very close to you because for the first time since I wrote about *The Borrowers*, I am in the house on which much of this story was based: I did not realize how much until I arrived here some days ago. Some of you will not have read this story but, in writing to you, I must pretend to myself that you have—otherwise I should have to tell it over again, right from the beginning.

The azalea bank is still here, and it is covered with primroses—just as it was, on that fateful day when Arrietty met the boy. I am sending you a primrose from this bank: perhaps, it will not look much when it arrives, by air-mail across the ocean, but you must think of them growing in nests and clumps, all over the country-side 'pale as butter'.

The azalea bush is bigger perhaps but it is still full of birds: it is just below my bedroom window and they wake me in the early morning. The gravel-path is just as I have described it. For one awful moment, I thought there wasn't a grating—but there is, in just the right place, but a little lower.

Coming in through the front-door, on the right—instead of the morning-room (where the Overmantels lived), there are the double-doors of the dining-room. It always was here but changed in the book. The drawing-room, behind double-doors on the left, is just as it was in the story—here the Harpsichords lived, you remember, on cake-crumbs and water from the flower-vases.

The kitchen passage is just as it was—swing door and all, but the kitchen-floor

has been tiled right over now, with red tiles (no more nonsense with loose floorboards!) but I was able to show just where the Clock family lived—and how convenient it was for stove and grating . . .

You would like this house: it has always been full of children and young people—it is not nearly so sad as I made it sound in the story. There are three lakes, one above the other, as you go up into the woods: in the stables (where the Rain-pipes lived) there is a little theatre, the dressing-rooms are the old loose-boxes. The stage has all kinds of lighting effects and the audience sit on old 'bus seats, very comfortable. There is also a ping-pong room in the stables: you call it 'table-tennis', I think . . .

But this just gossiping and time on the air, I believe is very expensive, we mustn't gossip with it. I will go out now, through the front-door, past the boot-scrapers, and pick you your primrose.

My love to all. Goodbye.
Mary Norton

You cannot long doubt the depth of Mrs. Norton's insight nor the keenness of her powers of observation. Arrietty, when she doesn't want to help with the household tasks, knows that it is safe to be writing, for "Homily liked her to write." Pod warns his wife or daughter against becoming fussed because it makes one silly and "that's when accidents happen." Arrietty is really disturbed when for the first time, her parents agree with her!

Oh, no—it shocked her to be right. Parents were right, not children. Children could say anything, Arrietty knew, and enjoyed saying it—knowing always they were safe and wrong.¹

The books are not always easy reading for our boys and girls, for some of the words used are definitely British in flavor

and others, too, are relatively new, but as the author says in the article mentioned earlier, "Words have color and feeling, as well as sense," and somehow children who are enjoying the stories can capture enough of the feel and meaning that the strangeness of the vocabulary does not disturb their reading.

The rather dry bits of humor tucked unexpectedly into paragraphs are such fun. A chessman has been taken from upstairs and graces the Clocks living room and "lent that air . . . which only statuary can give."²

The vision of Uncle Hendreary in all his stuffiness standing by the cupid on the mantel and being dusted brings forth many a giggle, and then when he sneezes . . . ! The picture of borrowers rowing around in the human beans' huge soup-pot fishing for the marrow and bringing home tasty bits of flotsam and jetsam is downright funny. And the idea of Homily, in all of her plainness and fussiness, longing for a "palm in a pot" is just too much for some listeners.

Boy and Girls and The Borrowers

And listeners there should be. The books are better when they are read aloud and shared. The only other way of even thinking of reading them is to go through each one swiftly and then reread, slowly taking the needed time to savor them fully. The first reading has to be swift—otherwise the suspense is just too much. By going slowly on the second reading, you can see the leeches like "blobs of expanding velvet" and you can feel the "sharp-

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 50.

²Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 18.

edged leaves, deceptively sappy and swaying, which cut their hands."¹

Swiftly or slowly, it isn't until you read the books aloud, that you realize the full enchantment of those halcyon days when Arrietty read aloud to the boy—

every afternoon in the long grass beyond the cherry tree. He would lie on his back and she would stand beside his shoulder and tell him when to turn the page. They were happy days to look back on afterwards, with the blue sky beyond the cherry boughs, the grasses softly stirring, and the boy's great ear listening beside her. She grew to know that ear well, with its curves and shadows and sunlit pinks and golds. Sometimes, as she grew bolder, she would lean against his shoulder. He was very still while she read to him and always grateful. What worlds they would explore together—strange worlds to Arrietty.²

I have never known a boy or girl who has listened to either book as it was read aloud, who has not been caught by its magic.

Sometimes people who enjoy *The Borrowers* are a bit shy about discussing the book—there are those unfeeling souls who laugh about it. One day as I was visiting in a classroom I saw on the window sill (could it be?) a borrowers collection. There were tiny pieces of ribbon, a few miniatures, and bits of this and that. I searched carefully through my pocket and purse and could find only a paper clip, but

I added this to the collection. The understanding smiles of approval told me my guess had been correct.

Much later I went back to the same classroom to show them a part of my collection . . . a tiny work basket complete with wool and needles for Homily, a miniature but sturdy basket for Pod, and a leather-bound Almanac, hardly one by two inches in size, for Arrietty. In spite of the fact that it was published in 1882 and would have been a little out of date by Arrietty's time, she would have found much to interest her in the "Table of Kings and Queens," "Lord Mayors and Sheriffs," "Holidays," and "Current Coins."

After reading the stories aloud, one is always asked, "Will there be another book?"—"Well, will there?"

Where had Aunt Lupy been, that Uncle Hendreary sent for her to come home?
What really did happen to Eggleletina?
Is Tom turned out of the cottage?

Are the borrowers still there?
Is Spiller one of Uncle Hendreary's boys?
How are Lupy and Homily even going to divide up the furniture?
Is Arrietty going to have to go back to a cooped-up confining existence again?

Well, what do you think? There almost has to be another book, and as Mrs. May says,

stories really never end.
They can go on and on.³

¹Mary Norton, *The Borrowers Afield*, Harcourt-Brace, 1955, p. 41.
²Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, Harcourt-Brace, 1953, pp. 131-132.

Miss Maxine Brown, a student of Dr. Walter Barbe, reports this incident:

The eighth graders were to conjugate the verbs listed on the mimeographed worksheet. Not unexpectedly, the word eat came out as *cat*. A pupil dutifully responded,
"Cat — cats — kittens."

School Research in Reading

Superintendents of schools are besieged with questions, "Why don't you do this? Why don't you do that? Why don't you do it this way? Why don't you use this book? Why don't you use this method?" and so on. These superintendents naturally want to do the best for their children. They seek for information on every one of these questions, and they usually find little in books or magazines. There has not been much research on the practical matters of school teaching and management. So the superintendents undertake "try-outs" in one field or another, or assign the investigations to one or more of their assistants or principals. "School research" results and school research is therefore a natural and an inevitable thing.

But superintendents need to realize that school research can come up with the wrong answer unless it is carefully planned and watched. Schoolmen everywhere are carrying on so-called "experiments" and coming up with results which do not withstand critical attention. Figures are secured, it is true, but figures can be the wrong ones and can be wrongly interpreted. The makers of the experiments are often not experienced enough to look out for all the possible sources of error. One who is experienced can see at once what should have been done differently, and therefore why the results cannot be relied upon. Thus many school experiments are worse than wasted time; they may actually lead to wrong decisions and practices. This is especially true in the field of reading. It is with this fact in mind that we wish here

to point out the precautions that should be taken when there is any research on reading by a school or school system.

1. *Compare "equal teachers" working equally hard.*

In long study of research on reading, experienced investigators have come to the conclusion that the teacher who uses the method is more important than the method used. Now a recent school research selected for a try-out some of the best teachers in the system. This selection was natural enough, since superior teachers are interested in trying new methods. Then these fine teachers reported "they had worked harder on this study than they ever worked before." Again this was natural. But when this experiment was over, the administrator compared the results of these "better teachers working harder" with the results of "usual teachers doing usual work" and claimed that the difference was *due to the materials used*. Any experienced investigator knows at once that such a comparison is utterly false. Unfortunately, those not experienced will not know that in order to tell if different materials get different results we must "compare equal teachers working equally hard." Therefore many will believe the claims of this study. So here is a case of school research that actually deludes both the makers of the study and the patrons of the schools. Such a result is not to be desired by any school administrator.

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2. *Compare pupils of equal natural ability and equal home influences.*

It is true that it is the teachers of the favored schools which most often volunteer for research. These teachers may have superior training, and they certainly have less to worry them. They do not have the low mental ages in their rooms and the poverty stricken homes from which children come with hardly enough sleep or food. It is all right, of course, for such favored teachers in favored schools to experiment and to come to conclusions. But the administrator will remember the requirement, "Compare pupils of equal natural ability and of equal home influences." He will not take results from favored schools and publish them for the whole town when they apply only to these favored schools.

For instance, a program of quantity reading can be shown to have remarkable effects in a favored school. The rooms can be filled with books, the rooms can have story hours, there can be a campaign for library membership, and so on. Reading will shoot up as a result. But we also find in many schools which make this experiment that before the experiment the average reading ability for every room was a full grade above the school grade of the room. That is, the fourth grade averaged fifth, the fifth grade averaged sixth, and so on. That is the norm for favored communities, a full grade above the national norm for ordinary schools. Do the teachers know this? Do the parents know it? Do the service clubs of business men know it? With this superior reading ability, quantity reading is an easy road to higher scores. But what about the unfavored schools where the "natural norm" is *below* the

national average, where there is no reading matter in the home, and where the children have all sorts of handicaps of poor social surroundings? Do the results from the favored schools apply here? Why not have some school research in the unfavored schools to get some real facts these schools can use? We believe that a quantity program will get results there too, but it will have to be a different kind of a program. For we must "compare pupils of equal natural ability and equal home influences."

3. *Compare only equal school time and emphasis.*

Every schoolman knows that he can put on a campaign for anything and get better results for the time being. He can do this for spelling, for handwriting, for politeness, for thrift, for anything. But does the public know this? We fear they do not. So very often we have school research which consists of a campaign. The results are talked up as due to some device or material or the like, whereas they are only due to there having been a campaign. After the campaign, the results may well drop back again to where they were.

Now here is a good opportunity for school research. What improvement should one expect in any field as a result of this emphasis? The schools can try out campaigns for one thing or another, measure the results, and then again measure the results a year or two years later after the campaign has been forgotten. We would then know just how much allowance to make for emphasis, and we could tell the public about it. We need school research on this matter of emphasis.

Most important, however, is the matter of time that is given to any subject.

Any special "try-out" is likely to get both emphasis and more time. More time is secured for anything by taking that time away from something else. There is no spare time in the school day. So every school experiment needs to specify strictly just what time was given to the experiment and just what time other classes gave to the same topic. Then the teachers must be warned not to "work in" the experimental subject at odd times and not to switch over to it the moments that might otherwise be given to story telling, to discussion of projects, or to any other kind of activity.

It is much to be feared that this matter of time is the one on which most school research fails. Suppose any school system proclaims that by the use of some plan or method it gets unusual results in any field, such as reading, for instance. The experienced observer at once asks, "How much time was given?" And usually there is no answer. Without an answer, the observer at once concludes that extra time was given but that the school is unwilling to say that it was. This is the one thing we must watch out for. By giving extra time, anyone can get better results in anything. We can have children do better in spelling, handwriting, geography, arithmetic, or in anything else just by giving the subject more time. So let every school research carefully check on this item of time and make an explicit explanation of it.

4. *Watch carefully size of class.*

The greatest aid a teacher can have in getting results in her work is to have a small class. This is true for two reasons: First, the teacher can actually give individuals more time if the class is small. Second, the smaller class helps enormously in the teacher's control of the attention

of all, in causing fewer distractions from individual pupils, and in enabling the teacher to get the kind of class unity which will help in learning. So every experiment must specify at once the size of the class used. It must also tell the size of the class in other schools which are used as controls. If an observer sees an experimental class of 25 and other classes of 35, he will know at once that the results from the small class cannot be applied to the other classes without great modification. The experienced observer knows this. All the teachers know it. Does the administrator know it? Does the public know it? We want research that helps in public understanding of the schools, not the kind that produces more misunderstanding.

An important part of size of class is the presence in the room of a teacher's helper. In some try-outs, the teacher has a practice teacher to help her. The teacher's helper may even be an eighth grade girl, or a high school girl who wants to learn about teaching. Use of these helpers is fine, both for the helper and for the teacher. The helper can look after one group while the teacher devotes herself to a small number of children. The helper may even take care of difficult individuals and thus free the teacher for real teaching. The helper may take care of routine jobs, and thus permit more teaching. So if an experiment uses teacher helpers, it should say so, and the results must be considered in the light of that fact.

5. *Beware of misleading averages.*

When any experiment shows an increase in the average score or performance of a class, it is often assumed that the whole class has improved. But has it? Very often it has not at all. For example, it is

well known that the way to get a higher average for any class in reading is to speed up the upper end of the class. That is rather easy to do. Then you can add all the reading scores, divide by the total number in the class, and find a higher average. But has all of the class improved?

The only precaution against the frequent failure of averages to tell the whole truth is to get and to study the total distribution of scores. Look at the scores at the lower end of the class. What happened to them? In fact, it is often found that a method which pushes up the score of the top of the class actually depresses the scores of the lower end, yet still gives a higher "average score." But the lower end of the class is what the superintendent should be worried about. Teachers' troubles come from the lower end of the class. Discipline problems come from the lower end. Dropouts come from the lower end of the class. Juvenile delinquency usually comes from the lower end of the class.

As a precaution, therefore, no matter what the averages, study the scores of the lower end of the class as well as the averages. Superintendents so often present charts of averages only. But did *all* the class improve? What happened to the lower end?

6. *Watch for unmeasured results.*

In most of the school subjects we do have carefully made and carefully used tests. But those who know testing best are the first to say that the most important results have not as yet been measured. For instance, everyone knows that the most important thing in a school is the morale of the teaching force. But where is it measured? The most important thing in any

room is the morale of the class. But how measure it?

It is possible, for instance, to put on a campaign for better arithmetic and use all kinds of pressure-contests, prizes, punishments, and so on—and as a result to get much higher scores in arithmetic. But the important thing about arithmetic is whether children like to do it. If they do not, they will avoid arithmetic no matter what their scores. It is true that those who are best at arithmetic usually like to show how good they are. But to a great many children, arithmetic is not part of their life. They can learn it, but there is a limit to the amount of time and thought they will give to it. If more is demanded, they resent the imposition, even though they may make higher scores. So the big thing about teaching arithmetic is, Do they like to do arithmetic? If not, the situation is bad no matter how high the average score.

In the case of reading, the great thing is liking to read so that the child will become accustomed to go to books for fun and for information. We have no way of measuring scientifically this liking to read, but we must not forget it. So no matter what the reading scores, we must likewise ask, "Do they like to read?" And this means *all* the children, and not just the bookish ones.

Liking to read also produces important results that can never be statistically measured. If a child reads, he absorbs the ideas of the authors, the ideals of the characters, the incidental understanding of the past and the present that comes only from reading. If a child reads and the reading is pleasant, he is bound to get these things. They are of the highest importance. But they do not show in a test score. So we

need to look for these things quite apart from any testing.

Incidentally, there is a most important possible result of any experiment that a school administrator must look out for. That is the possible resentment toward the testing that may be felt by either teachers or parents. Neither teachers nor parents must feel discriminated against or put in an unfavorable position. Things must be so planned that this result just does not happen. And very often this consideration will be stronger than many others.

As we have said, superintendents want to find things out and rightly look to experimentation in their schools to give the answers. Such experimentation needs every encouragement. But an experiment can lead to the wrong results as well as the right ones. So every superintendent who

plans such an experiment, or who asks someone else to plan it, should look out for these six things at least:

1. Compare equal teachers working equally hard.
2. Compare pupils of equal natural ability and equal home influences.
3. Compare equal school time and emphasis.
4. Watch carefully size of class.
5. Beware of misleading averages.
6. Watch for unmeasured results of any experiment.

If these and similar precautions are taken to make a piece of research sound and reliable, we shall have school experiments and try-outs that will shed much needed light on school problems, especially in the widely discussed field of reading.

MILDRED A. DAWSON

Children Need to Write

A teacher in the middle-grades recently told me, "We have had a wonderful year in language. We have told stories, given plays, made reports, discussed and explained in all our lessons. We have had very little of that writing that is so hard and that bores children. My, but they're good at talking. I'm proud of the youngsters." And I was glad—so glad that the children had learned to speak creditably and enjoy doing so. But I was sorry at the same time, because I had just been evaluating hundreds of papers written by middle-grade pupils and had found so many poorly done.

This teacher's pupils had learned to

speak well because they had had abundant opportunities to talk, and to talk with a purpose. It is equally true that children need to write frequently on varied occasions that demand purposeful writing if they are to learn to write fluently and correctly. All too often a teacher stresses only one side of language—correct usage or speaking or writing; and then the pupils fall down in the other aspects. What we need is a well-rounded program that helps pupils to listen, to speak, and to write effectively and confidently.

A well-known supervisor of language

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arts once said to me, "Be sure that you tell teachers to have their pupils write something every day. That's the only way that children can learn to write. It may be for only five minutes in a creative-expression period; it may be an answer to a question in history; it may be a news item in the school paper. But do urge the teachers to have the children write."

So let's have the children write—sometimes in language period if you have one, often in connection with other lessons. But let's be careful not to have the writing a routine affair of using each spelling word in a sentence, of keeping a required notebook in social studies, or of writing a formal book report. Instead, let the children write letters to secure enriching supplementary materials or to thank a guest speaker, or take and organize notes on a report to fill gaps in information which the class wants to get, or create an original story or poem to share with classmates. We must be sure that the children sense a purpose for all the writing they do.

While writing may be classified in many ways, we shall here divide it into two categories—*practical* and *personal*. The practical will be that writing which a child does to accomplish some task or to meet some responsibility, such as summarizing worthwhile information into a report or narrative to be read to the class or to be placed in a school publication such as a newspaper, magazine, booklet, or portfolio. Much of this practical writing will be in connection with lessons in the various subjects.

The personal writing will be done as part of some social situation, such as *real* letter writing, or as a response to inner

emotions in the way of creative writing such as stories, poems, and humorous or critical essays. A situation arises; some definite feeling results; there follows an inner compulsion for the child to express himself in writing; then there results an imaginative story or a bit of verse or a critical editorial or a clever, chuckle-inducing essay.

What is the function of the language period in a program where much of the writing is done in other lessons? Probably this question can best be answered by delineating specific situations.

The class is studying national parks and someone has suggested writing to the Superintendent of Documents and to the railroads and bus lines serving the park areas. Business letters will have to be written. In language period, the language textbook is consulted for lessons that show how to write a business letter and the lessons that would prove helpful are carried through. The letters that are eventually to be sent may be written in language period or in the social studies period —whichever is most convenient.

Or, a pupil has been selected to prepare a report in elementary science. He must first locate his materials, read and select those that are pertinent to his purpose, possibly take notes, almost surely organize his ideas in some way (an outline or a summary), and then present his report. His reading and language periods share the responsibility for teaching the skills called for in each of the steps in getting ready to present a report. Possibly in reading, he will learn to use a table of contents and index, to do the work-type of reading, and to select only those ideas which are pertinent to his purpose. These

skills he will learn because his various lessons have demanded them. In language period, he will similarly learn to take notes, to outline logically, to put his ideas together in good sequence. Again, the particular report to be given in the elementary science period may be prepared in the period devoted to that subject, or some time may be given in language period. The point is: whatever writing skills are demanded by any activity in any other subject should be built up in the language period. Language instruction is handmaiden to all the other curricular areas.

Personal writing, in some respects, is another matter. It is not assigned. It comes as the result of a natural situation that calls for a letter or stimulates an emotional response which will find an outlet in writing. When a pupil really wants to write a letter to a former classmate or some relative, when he is interested in exchanging letters with a pen pal in another country, when he feels genuine appreciation for a favor, he welcomes an opportunity to write and send a message. When he is stirred by a glowing sunset, his first ride in a plane, or victory in an intra-school sports contest, he may write a vivid description, a graphic account of an event, or an original narrative. (However, his creative urge may not result in writing, but in a colorful painting, a ringing tune, or a wood carving. Different persons react differently; and some do not verbalize their creative ideas easily).

What is the responsibility of the language period for personal writing? In the first place, this period can provide the time. If children are to express their feelings, there must be time available when the creative writers may "let themselves

go" in writing. Meanwhile the other pupils may be doing some practical writing or being creative in some medium other than words.

The language period has another particular service to perform. Often creative writing makes demands on spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure beyond the pupils' ability to achieve. While the teacher does not criticize creative writings of pupils and does little to improve them directly, she does note the pupils' writing needs and sees that the needed skills are dealt with as she teaches the pupils how to do their practical writing. Eventually the skills learned in connection with pupils' practical writing should and will carry over into their spontaneous creative productions.

For either practical or personal writing, there should be certain preliminaries. Children write well only when they know their materials thoroughly. Much of the poor writing (whether mechanical errors, shallow and barren ideas, or poor organization) that pupils do is the result of inadequate knowledge and understanding. In the area of firsthand, personal experience, pupils usually need very little preliminary guidance; but before writing about informational topics not based on direct experience, pupils need to have had a rich preparation in the way of several of the following activities: listening to teacher's explanation, class discussion to elicit present background and questions still to be answered, reading, looking at informational movies and still pictures, taking trips, giving and hearing reports, listening to visiting experts, and the like. Particularly important is the discussion that precedes, accompanies, and follows

each of these experiences, because knowledge is expanded, clarified, and organized as the discussion proceeds. Pupils tend to write well if they have a deep and rich background of information upon which to draw as they write.

Preliminary to personal writing must come the emotion-arousing experiences. These may be vicarious as children listen much and often to good literature, look at fine pictures, and orally share their enjoyable and vivid experiences of all kinds.

The situations, on the other hand, may be real: picnics, hikes, play with pets, escapes from danger, social occasions that suggest letters and so on. And remember! There must be time available to be self-expressive.

So let us observe, experience, and share through talking and *writing*. Children want to write when they really have something to say and a purpose for doing so. When they want to write, they tend to write well and often.

MARGARET S. DIXON

The Guard

"You like the little books, don't you, Robert?" Miss Drake asked as the child held a copy of Lois Lenski's book *Davy's Birthday* to be stamped. "The pictures are fun."

Robert said nothing as he grabbed the pencil and laboriously printed his first name with an encircled number *three* after it to indicate his grade. Then he picked up the tiny book and bolted toward the library door. "I sure like them little books, Miss Drake." And he was gone.

The rest of the children in the third grade checked out their books, made some comment about their choices, and were gone.

The September day passed quickly in the library. But something in Robert's small refrain "them little books" made Miss Drake unduly sad.

Robert was large and handsome. He looked ten years old but he was only eight. Maybe when the child got the 'feel' of things; maybe when the strangeness and

the rush of the new school year wore off; maybe . . . no . . . she had better not think too much. Yet, here was a child with a mental framework non-conditioned for the haste, for the competition, so early in life.

Weeks passed and the children continued to come and go. Most of them were now choosing longer books. Some liked books about horses, dogs, rabbits, mice, kittens, and beavers. Some liked stories about families, especially the ones who stayed together. A few children wanted books about the moon and the stars, and others wanted simple nature stories about the birds and the bees. Some wanted fairy tales and some chose poetry. A very small group had begun to choose more difficult stories such as the Walter Farley *Black Stallion* series. For a few, Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone were growing favorites.

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But Robert would have none of these. He came with his classmates from Monday through Friday, went to the shelves and searched frantically for the littlest book among the hundreds of colorful books of all sizes.

One day, as Miss Drake worked at the charging desk, she wondered: "How long will he continue to choose the littlest book? Will he always choose the easy things? Will he make the littlest choice when he becomes a man?" Then she looked up to recognize each child who came to the desk to check out his book. She talked with one little girl about how exciting *Peter Rabbit* was and with another little girl she enjoyed the thrill of *The Magic Key*. Soon the rest of the children had checked out their books and had left the library.

But not Robert. There he was on his knees, pushing and pulling out one book after another, still looking for the littlest one.

Miss Drake went to Robert and knelt down with him.

"Don't hurry, Robert," she said. And she started to look for a book, but not for one so little as Robert's former choices.

"Got any more books like *Davy's Birthday?*"

"Here's a book about a boy's birthday, Robert. I think he's almost as old as you are."

Disregarding the statement about the age, Robert quickly asked, "What's his name, Miss Drake? Can he spell it?"

"I'm not sure, Robert, but let's read a little to find out."

They got off their knees and sat in a little corner at the end of the library. Miss Drake started to read from Quail Hawkins'

The Best Birthday. Slowly she read the first lines:

When Dick Lyon woke up early Christmas morning, the rain was beating hard against the windows. The faint sound of the foghorn on the Bay told him this was going to be a foggy, wet holiday. But Dick did not mind. He had lived all his seven and a half years in San Francisco, and it always rained like this in the winter.

Robert slid off his chair, snatched the book from Miss Drake, ran to the desk, and laboriously printed his first name and encircled the number *three* after it.

"This book ain't little, Miss Drake, but I'm gonna read it 'cause I know Dick's other name." And off he went.

Dick's other name! What connection? Is Robert's last name some kind of a key? Maybe Friday will tell the tale. Give Robert time and he will grow into longer books. Through Wanda Gág's *Snippy and Snappy* he will learn of things, animals, and people in their right places; it is a little book and he will eventually read it. In Robert McClosky's *Blueberries for Sal* with the flavor of the great north country in it, Robert will read of mother and bear love. He will learn of no fear in human child or bear cub. Well, sighed Miss Drake, let Friday come.

Friday came and so did Robert. A big smile lay across his large, handsome face. As he returned his book, he slipped behind the desk and whispered in Miss Drake's ear, "Show me how to spell my other name, Miss Drake."

Together they learned to spell his last name. The boy smiled as he tried to print the name *Leydon* on a piece of scratch paper. "It looks like Dick Lyon's name, Miss Drake," he said. Then with quiet pride he took the slip of paper and went

downstairs to his classroom.

There was no way to share this joy, Miss Drake knew. It was one of the deep things quietly unfolding as masses of clouds unfold and silently feather out into thin white flames. It is pure joy like the thinness of the flames upon the sky. It is knowing that Someone pours sacred oil on the stars to keep them lighted throughout the long night. No one knows why or how it is done. But one knows that it is done silently and slowly. One knows that it is done to keep eternal order of some kind. One knows that it is done for a child . . .

As surely as day follows night, Robert came back to the library and wanted another book about the same size as *The Best Birthday*. This time he asked Miss Drake to choose it.

She knew that she need not worry about the size of this book. She chose Wanda Gág's *Millions of Cats*.

Before Robert checked out the book, Miss Drake told him about the little cat who let all the other cats alone because he thought that they were so handsome and he was so ugly. This cat felt rather glad in his sadness because he had made up his mind that he did not have to keep up with all the other cats so he just let them alone. "But now, Robert," Miss Drake said, "you will have to read the rest of the story to find out what happened to the millions of cats. I'll tell you this, though, that the little ugly cat did start to drink more and more milk. And every day he became bigger and bigger, and he liked getting bigger . . ."

Robert raised his big brown eyes, and said, "I want that book, Miss Drake."

Before he signed his name, he whispered, "I have to take two lines on the card

for my name, Miss Drake." And a good smile lighted up his face.

Laboriously again he printed his first name, and then his last. He did not forget the number *three*. Then he picked up the book about millions of cats, asked Miss Drake if she had stamped it, gently put it under his little shirt, patted it affectionately, and quietly left the library.

Miss Drake wished that she knew how his mind ticked as he tried to read the book they had both chosen. But she felt that somehow he would struggle through it. Somehow she felt that he would come Monday to tell her about the millions of cats and the one cat who survived the others.

She cleared the circulation desk, still thinking of Robert. There had been his refrain, "I like them little books, Miss Drake," and there had been his frantic search for the littlest book, and his silent gratitude for her help; there had been his childlike joy in learning to spell his last name; but most rewarding of all had been his inner victory . . . the acceptance of a book bigger than the little one.

"Well, maybe it isn't all so futile," sighed Miss Drake.

Then, because she liked to be free at the end of the day, she thought deliberately of something lovely. She thought of a forget-me-not. Why a forget-me-not? she did not know. Maybe it was because of the rarity of the pure blue pigment in the little flower; she thought of all the blueness in sky and water, but this little flower only, had the true blue pigment in it. Other flowers with blue in them have a touch of purple and black, like the bluebell and the violet . . . Children and forget-me-nots . . . There were so many thoughts.

She turned off the lights and took one sweeping glance around the library. There in the quickness of the northern twilight, she felt the intensity of order in all things. She knew that some kind of "mind on paper" lay on the pages of every book. She saw children doing their scattered searching with ease among the families of en-

cyclopedias. She felt their satisfaction in finding the answers to their questions. She saw Robert and once more she heard his refrain, "I like them little books, Miss Drake."

Then she knew that someone must guard the little things.

EDWARD MAST

Functional Vocabulary in Eighth Grade Science

The following experiment in teaching the use of word-accuracy as a necessity in the vocabulary of a scientist was carried out at the State Teachers College at Glassboro, New Jersey. The following science lesson was taught in a 35-minute period at the College Demonstration School. Two days later a modified version of the same lesson was taught to a group of in-service teachers at Rutgers University, New Jersey. Evaluations of both lessons are included in this report.

This lesson plan outlines the teacher's procedure:

Procedure

1. Ask the pupils to name the experiments that they saw on the two days preceding this class.
2. List these on the board.
3. Select a science assistant to demonstrate one experiment to the class.
4. Let all pupils record in their own notebooks the final generalization made by the science assistant.

5. Leading questions:

- a. What word tells us the kind of magnet used?
- b. What do we call a word that modifies a noun?
- c. Why should science recorders use adjectives?
- d. What would a scientist do if his recorder left out all the descriptive words?
6. Who would like to be the next science assistant?
7. Repeat 4 and 5.
8. Leading questions:
 - a. What else could we use instead of a horseshoe-bar?
 - b. What adjectives tell us the most about the magnet?

Assignment

1. Ask pupils to use their own recordings to make an experience chart.

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2. Call for volunteers to write a news report on the lessons about magnets.

As the lesson proceeded need was established for specific words, especially adjectives such as:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. exact | 7. permanent |
| 2. precise | 8. temporary |
| 3. north pole | 9. induced |
| 4. south pole | 10. molecular |
| 5. accurate | 11. electro |
| 6. valid | |

The use of compound nouns was also discussed with such words as:

1. bar magnet
2. horseshoe magnet
3. lodestone

The teacher emphasized the importance of an adjective in a sentence when he asked:

1. Is that a valid test?
2. Is that the accurate word?
3. Why does a scientist take special care in his vocabulary?

The board work by the children was in outline form.

1. Magnetic poles
2. Magnetic field
3. Electromagnet
4. Lodestone
5. Compass
6. North Pole
7. Magnetic material
8. Attraction
9. Repulsion

This is the material by a pupil who was selected to record important experiments and facts.

Where magnets are used:

1. Electro-magnets are used in junk yards.

2. Alnico magnets are used in industry on airplanes.
3. Medical magnets are used by doctors to remove pins from the stomach.
4. A compass is a magnet that points to the magnetic poles.
5. The telephone transmitter and receiver use magnets.

The magnets were used to test things we brought in.

Name	Article	Was it attracted by the magnet?
Pattie	penny and dime	No
Carol	pencil	No
Branin	penknife	No
Carolyn	violin string	No
Aleta	paper clip	No
Barbara	shoe	Yes
Janis	necklace	Yes
Mickey	metal filings	Yes

True properties of a magnet:

1. Certain metals
 - a. Steel
 - b. Iron

We placed a piece of oak tag over a magnet. This was sprinkled with iron filings. It showed the magnetic field. We sprayed it to keep the design of the horseshoe magnet as a record of the experiment.

There are two poles on a magnet, north and south. A north pole and a north pole repel each other. A south pole and a south pole repel each other. A south and a north pole attract each other.

The lodestone is a natural magnet. The man-made bar magnet was used to test the lodestone.

To make an electro-magnet we wound wire around a bolt. It was then connected to batteries.

The day following this experiment several pupils in the eighth grade set up problems of their own.

Does a north pole of a bar magnet attract the north pole of another bar magnet? The pupils discovered that one bar magnet was not operating according to the laws of magnetism. Several of the pupils told the instructor of the new occurrence that was contrary to his teaching.

An outgrowth lesson was set up using a compass to demonstrate that the poles were reversed. One pupil suggested it might have changed by being dropped. Another pupil added that it could have been placed near the large alnico magnet.

Everyone discussed a means of changing the bar magnet back to its correct state.

We could hit it.

We could put a magnetic coil around it.

We could put it near the alnico magnet.

The class decided to put the faculty magnet on the alnico magnet and wait a few days. However, the alnico magnet was not strong enough to change the field.

The final decision was to write to the company that made it and ask them to change it.

The procedure at Rutgers paralleled that of the original lesson with the eighth grade pupils. The difference in lesson development was evidenced by questions on each phrase of the procedure as the lesson was unfolded. These in-service teachers interrupted with such questions as:

1. Why are the polished metals on the pocketbook attracted?
2. We have seen these man-made magnets, but is there a natural magnet?
3. How do you connect a battery?
4. What is meant by molecular structure?
5. Can we make an electro-magnet?
6. What is the position of molecules in a magnetized metal?

The student-teacher at each question drew black-board diagrams, used simple apparatus at hand, and inductively led the questioner through a series of explanations which finally clarified the issue. The students paced the lesson.

Although the demonstration for the Rutgers students did not include the lesson on adjectives, an explanation of integration of the two subjects was presented.

Evaluation

The purpose of this experiment in precision of vocabulary within the framework of three science lessons lies in the fact that the boys and girls realized the value of vocabulary essentials basic to their grade presented in a meaningful situation. This situation showed the principles of induction, the field of magnetic attraction, polarity, and the laws of attraction and repulsion.

That pupils were able to make their own application of the necessity of knowing and using the right word in the right place in a situation at a high interest level was proved by the outgrowth problems set up by the class on the next day.

MARY E. COBER

We Write to Our Favorite Authors

As a joint letter writing and Book Week project, each member of the fifth grade wrote to his favorite author.

The project was initiated early in September when we began to discuss our favorite books and the reasons we liked them so much. Each child had an opportunity to tell the rest of the children about his book and to read any brief part that he thought would be enjoyable for the entire group. This was a painless way of doing "book reports."

Meanwhile we were reviewing the proper way to write a friendly letter with the idea that we wanted to do our best when we wrote to "our" author.

It was necessary to have the address of each author before we could write. This involved research in the library and the use of such books as *The Junior Book of Authors* and *Who's Who*. We found that even with the use of these books, the information wasn't always available. Our librarian, Mrs. Newcomb, came to our rescue and produced a personal copy of *The Writer's Market* in which we found the addresses of the publishing companies that had produced our favorite books. The majority of our letters were sent to the publishers and they very accommodatingly forwarded them to the author in question. In some cases the publisher answered the letter.

Operation Letter took place on the last Thursday of September. A first draft of the letter was written. Each child told the author the name of the book he particularly liked and why he liked it. He re-

quested an autograph and if possible a picture to display with the author's book or books for Children's Book Week. He checked his letter carefully before making a copy to send out. The original letter was kept to be displayed with its answer when and if it arrived.

Two days later Random House sent a picture of Dr. Seuss in a folder listing his books. That day there was great excitement in the fifth grade. Authors were people, real people. Judy mounted the folder and picture along with the copy of her letter and put them on a blackboard that was serving temporarily as a bulletin board. On the reading table below the picture she made a display of some of Dr. Seuss's works. She had found that *Children's Activities* frequently carried his poems and she hunted through many back issues to find these.

Each day from then on a letter or two found its way to our room. Each letter was read to the class as it arrived. There was such a feeling of pride in the letters that it was as though every child had helped write each of them. This brought on another siege of letter writing by some of the children. When they read a new book they had enjoyed, they wrote and told the author. One little boy wrote to Walt Disney, President Eisenhower, and then to our school nurse who was in the hospital. He had learned to communicate by writing.

By American Education Week twenty-

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one authors had answered our letters. The parents were as interested in the display as the children and made a special point of visiting the room to see the letters. There were many favorable comments on the quality of the letter that the children had written, too.

By Children's Book Week all but three children had received a reply and some children had received two. Ann Nolan Clark sent her reply airmail so that it would arrive in time. By now letter writing was practically painless, so the children decided to write invitations to several other rooms and invite them in to see their Book Week display.

Over 150 children visited the fifth grade that week giving the group an excellent opportunity to act as host. They read the letters with interest and carefully examined the pictures and books. One eighth grade boy tried to read all of Dr. Seuss's poems.

"I read them to my little brother," he said. "I sure like them too. Dr. Seuss is all right."

When all the excitement was over and our last visitor had gone, we sat down to talk about the letters and our authors. The letters had ranged from brief notes to sev-

eral pages in length. It was agreed that one of the "best letters" was from Marion Obermeyer, the author of *The Six Robbers*. The little girl who had received this needed it probably more than anyone else in the room. She had never seemed to belong. Suddenly she was an important part of the group because her letter was special.

Other authors who had taken time to answer the letters were Thornton Burgess, Albro Gaul, Grace Noel Crowell, Frances Cavanah, Caroline D. Emerson, Phyllis Fenner, and Beverly Cleary, each of whom answered two letters, Hugh Coryell, Arthur Maxwell, Mildred Houghton Comfort, Marion Renick, and Helen Wells. Viola Hening, Jerry West, Ruthven Todd, Marth Goldberg, Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire, Dorothy K. L'Hommedieu, Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Morton, and A. M. Anderson also wrote to us.

Each child then wrote another letter to his author—to tell him about Book Week and to thank him for his part in it. This was the children's idea. They felt that Children's Book Week, 1955 was one they would long remember. As one child wrote to his author, "Book Week was a huge success and you helped to make it so."

My Winter's Dream

I dream of our dear cabin
On its pleasant sunny hill;
I dream of birds around it,
And think of them until
The voice of wind sounds urgent,
Plays with waterfalls a tune,
And the burden of its message is
"Come back! Oh, come back soon!"

By Nancy Carey, age 9, Southeast, Kansas City.
Taken from Spring, 1955 *Missouri's Youth Writes*. Published by the Missouri Association of Teachers of English.

VERA V. MILLER
AND
WENDELL C. LANTON

Reading Achievement of School Children — Then and Now

Are the children of today learning to read as well as those of twenty years ago? Are the teacher techniques in use today as successful as those of the past? Is too much time being devoted to music, arts and crafts, dramatics, and unit work to the detriment of the "Three R's"?

These are questions being raised by parents and educators in increasing numbers. Research studies conducted in an attempt to answer these questions have been inconclusive in many cases.

Since few large scale "past-present" comparative studies have been conducted in strategic geographic places throughout the country, each local school system must provide its own data if a nationwide "past-present" evaluation is to be made.

This need for carefully planned and scientifically controlled "then and now" researches at local school levels has led investigators to conduct studies in order to provide objective data on the "then and now" reading abilities of elementary-school children. Representative of such studies are those that have been conducted in St. Louis and Springfield, Missouri (1) (3); Grand Rapids and Dearborn, Michigan (2) (4); and Lincoln, Nebraska (9), in the United States; and St. Catharines, Ontario (8), in Canada.

The Evanston "Then and Now" Studies

In order to provide data on the relative

achievement of present-day elementary-school children in Evanston, Illinois, with that of children in the past, three "then and now" studies have been conducted in the Evanston public elementary Schools. This paper summarizes the findings of the reading comparisons made in a pilot study of the achievement of fourth-grade pupils in 1932 and 1952 (7); that of the achievement of third- and fifth-grade pupils in 1934 and 1953 (5); and finally, that of the achievement of eighth-grade pupils in 1933 and 1954 (6).

The basic plan of the studies was the administration of the same standardized tests to children today as those taken by children enrolled in the same grades and schools twenty years ago. This plan was feasible because the community was comparatively stable, good records had been maintained, and the tests had always been given by the Research and Testing Department which excluded the variable of teacher administered tests. Then, too, the present-day groups of pupils and those of the past were similar in most respects.

Community Described

For years, Evanston schools have had a good reputation for high standards of attainment and, according to a recent opinion survey (10), adults in Evanston are generally favorable to their school program. Thus, these studies were conducted in the absence of any community charges that the schools were neglecting the fundamentals.

Mrs. Miller is Director of Research and Dr. Lanton is a member of the staff in the Research Department of the Community Consolidated Schools, Dist. 65, Evanston, Ill.

*Appreciation is expressed to Dr. O. M. Chute, Superintendent of Schools, District 65, Evanston, Illinois, the principals, teachers, and test administrators for their generous cooperation. The writers are indebted to Dr. E. L. Clark, Department of Psychology, Northwestern University, who served as statistical consultant.

Several other community conditions provided a favorable setting for these studies. The area has not experienced expanded school boundaries. The population has remained relatively stable during the last twenty-five years. The area contains a cross section of people of different races and of varied social and economic status—a cross section that typifies the above-average large suburban university city.

Tests Used

The 1929 edition of the *New Stanford Achievement Test* was used for the fourth-grade pilot study; two levels of the 1933 edition of the *Metropolitan Achievement Tests* were selected for the third- and fifth-grade study; and the 1933 edition of the *New Stanford Achievement Test* was chosen for the eighth-grade study.

Although these tests were out of print, exact copies of the original tests were obtained by an offset printing made possible with the permission of the World Book Company.

Conditions surrounding the administration of the tests in the present duplicated those of the past as nearly as possible. The Director of the Research and Testing Department who had supervised the administration in the past supervised it again in the present. The children in each school were tested on or near the day of the month that the tests were given in the

past. Two trained and experienced test administrators gave the tests, the manual of directions was followed strictly, and the tests were scored in a central place by experienced persons.

In both years and grades, children who had not attended Evanston schools for one full year were excluded from the study. The children in the third- and fifth-grade study were enrolled in eight different schools of former District 75 (schools in North Evanston) and those included in the eighth-grade study attended a junior high school which draws students from the same eight schools.

Fourth-Grade Pilot Study, 1932-1952

Three schools typifying average, superior, and below-average economic groups in Evanston were chosen for the study. The fourth-grade classes in these schools were given the 1929 edition of the *New Stanford Achievement Test*, Form V, and the *Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Test* (fourth edition in 1932 and sixth edition in 1952). Since the numbers in a class and the range in chronological age differed considerably from the 1932 groups, it was decided to match individuals in the two groups as closely as possible in chronological age and intelligence and to use only these subjects in the study. This reduced the number to 58 pupils in each group or 116 cases in all.

From a study of Table 1, it appears that the

TABLE 1

MEDIAN SCORES IN READING COMPREHENSION, VOCABULARY,
INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS, AND RANGE OF SCORES IN
FOURTH GRADE, OCTOBER, 1932 AND 1952

	Median 1932	Median 1952	Difference	Range 1932	Range 1952
Reading Comp.	4.6	5.2	+.6	2.5-7.8	2.6-8.8
Vocabulary	4.6	5.4	+.8	2.6-8.4	2.3-7.8
I. Q.	104	109	+.5	89-126	89-123

1952 class did not suffer from the comparison. The 1952 groups earned scores 6 months higher in reading comprehension and 8 months higher in vocabulary than did their predecessors of 20 years ago.

While the results were encouraging, it was felt that more complete studies should be made at other grade levels.

Third-Grade Pupils Studied

This paper combines the information from

the eight schools although the full study gives complete details for each one. Table 2 shows that the number of girls was about the same as the number of boys in each of the years, 1934

and 1953. Also, girls for girls and boys for boys, the mean chronological ages and the mean intelligence quotients were essentially the same in the two years.

TABLE 2
NUMBER, MEAN CHRONOLOGICAL AGE AND MEAN INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT OF GRADE III-B AND GRADE V-B CHILDREN, 1934 AND 1953

Item	Girls		Boys	
	1934	1953	1934	1953
Third Grade:				
Number	153	166	151	162
Mean C. A. (months)	100.86	100.21	100.83	100.03
Mean I. Q.	106.53	106.87	105.35	103.64
Fifth Grade:				
Number	142	187	154	175
Mean C. A. (months)	125.89	125.24	125.69	127.42
Mean I. Q.	108.70	106.38	107.01	101.85

The mean intelligence quotients were derived from the fourth edition of the *Kublmann-Anderson Intelligence Tests* in 1934 and from the fifth edition in 1953.

Grade V-B Children Studied

Table 2 also shows a reasonable balance between boys and girls in Grade V-B in 1934 and again in 1953. The difference in size between the 1934 and 1953 groups, however, was not of special concern to the study. As in Grade III-B, the mean chronological ages of Grade V-B girls were about the same in the two years, and the similarity was also true of the Grade V-B boys. The mean intelligence quotients of Grade V-B boys showed the only significant differences in any of the group comparisons.* This difference was in favor of the 1934 boys.

*Significant difference is used in its technical statistical sense. It is determined by reducing differences to standard units. The full study interpreted significant differences at four levels of confidence. This summary combines the information on reliability of the differences and uses the term "significant" as an indication of odds of at least 95 (or better) in 100 that an obtained difference in means was true and not due to chance.

The full study included information on the variation within the groups which does not appear in Table 2. All 1934 groups showed a wider variation in both chronological ages and intelligence quotients than the 1953 groups. The writers believe that this suggests changes that have transpired in promotional practices since 1934 when slower children were more readily retained in grades and more double promotions were awarded to bright children than at the present time.

Grade VIII-B Children Studied

Table 3 shows the mean intelligence quotients, mental ages, and chronological ages of Grade VIII-B pupils in 1933 and 1954. The pupils in 1954 were younger than those in 1933, and the 1954 group also earned higher intelligence quotients as measured by the fourth edition of the *Kublmann-Anderson Intelligence Tests* in 1933 and by the sixth edition in 1954. The limitations of two forms of any tests must be recognized before generalizations can be made about the mental abilities of the children because these forms may not be rigorously parallel. Differences in mental abilities measured in this way may be

assignable in part to differences in the two forms. The use of exactly the same editions and forms of the achievement tests in these studies, on the other hand, had the possible disadvantage of being less appropriate for chil-

dren today since the achievement tests used in these studies contain items based upon textbooks and courses of study used in the 1920's and were standardized more than a quarter-century ago.

TABLE 3
COMPARISON OF THE MEAN INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS, MENTAL AGES,
AND CHRONOLOGICAL AGES OF GRADE VIII-B PUPILS
IN 1933 AND 1954

Item	Girls		Boys		Girls and Boys
	1933	1954	1933	1954	
Number	102	143	126	158	228
Mean I. Q.	108.77	113.86*	105.62	109.84	107.03
Mean M. A. (in months)	174.19	181.33*	171.78	175.53	172.85
Mean C. A. (in years)	13.5	13.3	13.8*	13.3	13.7*
Mean C. A. (in months)	161.42	159.43	163.85*	159.34	162.76*
					159.38

Indicates chances are at least 95 (or better) in 100 of a true difference. Differences not marked () are negligible from a statistical standpoint.

Differences in Reading Achievement

Table 4 shows the reading grade-equivalent means by grade, sex, and subtest as measured by the 1933 edition of the *Metropolitan Achievement Test*, Form A, Primary II Battery, for Grade III-B. This test was administered during the last week in September and the first week in October in 1934 and 1953. Table 4 also shows the reading achievement of Grade V-B children who were given the 1933 edition of the *Metropolitan Achievement Test*, Form A, Intermediate Battery, during the last week in October and the first week in November in 1934 and 1953.

These grades were selected because the third grade represents the primary level when most children have had at least two years, instruction in the so-called "Three R's," and the fifth grade represents the intermediate level after two more years of instruction in the "Three R's" have been given and a broader curriculum has been introduced.

Reading Achievement of Grade III-B Children

The grade-equivalent mean of Grade III-B girls was about two months higher in reading completion, about four months higher in paragraph meaning, and about six months higher in vocabulary. Grade III-B boys in 1953 earned a grade-equivalent mean score of approximately three months higher in reading completion, about two months higher in paragraph meaning, and about three months higher in vocabulary.

When the girls' and boys' scores were combined, Grade III-B pupils in 1953 earned grade-equivalent scores that were two months higher in reading completion, about three months higher in paragraph meaning, and about four months higher in vocabulary.

Reading Achievement of Grade V-B Children

Grade V-B girls in 1953 earned a grade-equivalent score that was three months higher

TABLE 4
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GRADE-EQUIVALENT MEANS OF READING
ACHIEVEMENT OF EVANSTON THIRD AND FIFTH GRADE PUPILS

Sex and Grade	Test	Grade-equivalent Means		Difference Between Means a]
		1934	1953	
Third Grade:				
Girls . . .	Reading Completion	3.56	3.75	.19*
. . .	Paragraph Meaning	3.51	3.86	.35*
. . .	Vocabulary	3.18	3.73	.55*
Boys . . .	Reading Completion	3.26	3.53	.27*
. . .	Paragraph Meaning	3.26	3.44	.18*
. . .	Vocabulary	3.05	3.32	.27*
Girls and				
Boys . . .	Reading Completion	3.42	3.64	.22*
. . .	Paragraph Meaning	3.39	3.65	.26*
. . .	Vocabulary	3.14	3.52	.38*
Fifth Grade:				
Girls . . .	Reading Comprehension	5.83	6.15	.32*
. . .	Vocabulary	6.10	6.39	.29*
Boys . . .	Reading Comprehension	5.64	5.81	.17
. . .	Vocabulary	5.92	6.19	.27*
Girls and				
Boys . . .	Reading Comprehension	5.73	5.97	.24*
. . .	Vocabulary	6.01	6.29	.28*

a] † indicates data favorable to present-day group.

* indicates chances are at least 95 (or better) in 100 of a true difference. Differences not marked (*) are negligible from a statistical standpoint.

in reading comprehension and about three months higher in vocabulary. Grade V-B boys in 1953 earned grade-equivalent scores that were about two months higher in reading comprehension and about three months higher in vocabulary. The combined scores of girls and boys in 1953 were two months higher in reading comprehension and about three months higher in vocabulary.

Total Difference Favored the 1953 Group

In addition to determining the differences by total class groups, the full study showed differences between the means for each of the eight Evanston schools by the categories of grade, sex, and subtest. When all these dif-

ferences for Grade III-B were considered, 96 reading comparisons were made between the pupils in 1934 and 1953. Eighty-seven per cent of the differences favored the 1953 groups.

When the grade, sex, and subtest comparisons were combined for Grade V-B comparisons, 83 per cent favored the 1953 group in reading comprehension and 92 per cent favored the 1953 group in vocabulary.

Eighth-Grade Reading Comparisons

Table 5 shows Grade VIII-B reading comparisons measured by the 1932 edition of the *New Stanford Achievement Test*, Form V. This test was administered to Grade VIII-B pupils during the last week in September and the first week in October in 1933 and in 1954.

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

TABLE 5
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GRADE-EQUIVALENT MEANS OF READING
ACHIEVEMENT OF EVANSTON GRADE VIII-B PUPILS
IN 1933 AND 1954

Sex and Grade	Test	Grade-equivalent Means		Difference Between Means a]
		1933	1954	
Eighth Grade:				
Girls . . .	Reading Comprehension	9.3	9.8	.5
. . .	Vocabulary	9.0	9.5	.5
Boys . . .	Reading Comprehension	8.9	9.5	.6*
. . .	Vocabulary	9.0	9.5	.5
Girls and				
Boys . . .	Reading Comprehension	9.2	9.7	.5*
. . .	Vocabulary	9.0	9.5	.5*

a] † indicates data favorable to present-day group.

* indicates chances are at least 95 (or better) in 100 of a true difference. Differences not marked (*) are negligible from a statistical standpoint.

The table shows that Grade VIII-B girls earned a grade-equivalent score which was five months higher in reading comprehension and vocabulary. Grade VIII-B boys in 1954 earned a grade-equivalent score which was six months higher in reading comprehension and five months higher in vocabulary. The combined grade-equivalent scores for Grade VIII-B girls and boys in 1954 were five months higher in reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Concluding Statement

This report summarizes the findings of three studies of the "then and now" reading achievement of 1,828 children in the 1930's and 1950's.

It was found that present-day pupils attending Evanston schools at the primary, intermediate, and junior high-school levels read with more comprehension and understand the meaning of words better than did children who were enrolled in the same grades and schools more than two decades ago.

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ROBERT LEESTMA

The Film-Reader Program

The Nature of Reading

Reading is a process of symbolic interpretation. Words are the symbols the reader must interpret. Words are non-pictorial abstract symbols that bear no visual resemblance to the things they represent. The printed word *d-o-g* does not look at all like the friendly four-footed neighborhood animal that barks and wags its tail. Quite understandably, then, learning to read—learning to get correct visual pictures and concrete meanings from abstract non-pictorial symbols—is usually a difficult task for youngsters.

Some Problems in the Teaching of Reading

Reading instruction must be closely related to the experiences of the learners if the learners are going to enjoy much success in perceiving meaning in the abstract symbols that words are. A big problem in this respect is the tremendous variation in experience among the various members of an average class. Not only will there be a variation in the kind of experience the various class members have had, but also in the amount of experience. The need for a common denominator of experience as a basis for beginning reading has long been accepted, and such techniques as the experience story have been widely used to help achieve the necessary common background of experience.

Another major problem in the teaching of reading is *stimulating and maintaining pupil interest*, interest in the difficult task of learning to manipulate lifeless abstract symbols that actually represent exciting real experiences. The teaching of reading has traditionally suffered from rote memory exercises divorced from actual experience. Drill on meaningless and uninteresting (to the child) abstractions has understandably caused many children to develop a deep resentment against reading and, by association, against the rest of the school situation as well.

Interest and experience are closely interrelated. Effective learning is most likely to occur when emphasis is placed upon experiences that are "particularly challenging to the children, experiences which they are eager to talk about, work on, and remain interested in."¹

Immaturity for reading constitutes another major problem. It is sometimes caused by an unstimulating environment. As Harris points out,

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¹*Guiding Children's Reading Through Experiences*, Roma Gans, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1941. p. 30.

"Some children come to school without ever having gone more than a mile or two from their homes, without ever having seen a zoo, a boat, or a circus, without ever having looked inside the covers of a picture book or having had a story read to them. Their limited experience naturally results in a scanty vocabulary and a restricted stock of ideas."

In such instances the importance of broadening the child's experience is obvious.

The problem of learning to read is further complicated by the need to know the aural form of the word as well as the visual form; to be able to understand it when it is spoken and to be able to pronounce it correctly.

Wouldn't it be helpful if we had tools for teaching beginning reading that somehow provided for a common denominator of experience; that helped associate an experience with the word symbols for that experience; that provided for effective association between the experience, the word symbols for the experience, and the sound of the word symbols; that held the children's interest throughout the entire process and motivated them to do more reading; and that broadened the children's understanding of the natural world and their social environment through an experience of interest to them and within the range of their comprehension?

New Tools for Teaching Reading

Promising new tools for teaching reading that help accomplish such goals are now available. These tools are the coordinated use of selected educational motion pictures and their correlated film readers. These film readers were developed by Encyclopaedia Britannica Films in cooperation with book publishers D. C. Heath and Company and Row, Peterson and Company.

The basic common experience is provided

¹*How To Increase Reading Ability*, Albert J. Harris, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1940. p. 15.

by an Encyclopaedia Britannica sound film designed for the elementary grades and a correlated reading book that has been especially developed for use with the film.

The films are authentic and interesting treatments of topics that are important to children. They are standard elementary curriculum films that are readily available for rental from most film libraries and are locally owned by many school systems. All but one are ten minutes in length.

The film reader is an attractive thirty or thirty-six page book closely correlated with the film. On each page of the film reader is an enlarged picture from a significant sequence in the film. Each picture is presented in the order in which it appeared in the film and hence the sequential nature of the experience is preserved.

At the time of the film showing, the pictorial experience was interpreted verbally in the sound track of the film. The children have been exposed to the spoken words in context by means of the film, and thus an understanding of the relationship between the spoken symbol and the thing it represents is developed.

Accompanying the picture on each page is a series of sentences closely related to the picture. These sentences contain certain of the spoken words and phrases used in the sound track of the film. Thus, a relationship between the printed symbols and the spoken symbols is established.

A key factor in the film-reader technique is the establishment of an easy link between the spoken words in the film and the printed words in the reader. The still picture on each page of the reader provides this link. The still picture provides a bridge between the film experience of picture and spoken word and the printed words in the reader.

Film Readers Currently Available

At present, three sets of film readers are available. Each set contains eight film readers,

each reader bearing the title of the Encyclopaedia Britannica film with which it is correlated.

Two sets are published by D. C. Heath and Company under the general series title of "It's Fun to Find Out." The Heath sets were prepared under the direction of Dr. Paul Witty. One set is designed for second grade and the other for third grade. The titles in the second grade set are: *A Day at The Fair; The Food Store; The Fireman; Farm Animals; Gray Squirrel; The Mailman; Shep, The Farm Dog; and Three Little Kittens*. The titles in the third grade set are: *Airport, Billy and Nanny, Bus Driver, Doctor, Elephants, Tugboats, Visit with Cowboys, and Circus Day in Our Town*.

Simple questions about the story are included at the end of each book, along with a list of words from the text under the heading, "Can You Use These Words?" The questions contain the words learned in the story in new and different contexts. This provision is included to provide opportunity for the child to read to learn—under circumstances favorable to success. It is important for children to begin early to experience satisfaction in using reading to secure new information. Because the child *understands* the words he has learned in his film and reader experience, he is likely to experience success and satisfaction with the words in slightly different contexts.

The different context of these sentences provides a check on reading ability, especially comprehension. If there are any children who have just memorized the story without really understanding the words, they can be spotted easily.

Each book is thirty pages in length and costs 25c.

The other set is published by Row, Peterson and Company and is correlated with films from Encyclopaedia Britannica's "Children of Many Lands" film series. These readers were prepared under the direction of Mabel O'Donnell and Elizabeth Bloss, and are designed for

fourth and fifth grades. The titles in this set are: *English Children, Spanish Children, Children of China, Children of Japan, Norwegian Children, and French Children*.

Key words are repeated throughout each story, and pronunciation guides are included on the pages where unfamiliar words are first introduced. The back of each book contains a glossary of selected new terms in the text, and also a picture map of the country with which the book deals.

Each book is thirty-six pages long and costs 31c.

All three sets of books are very attractive and very satisfactory in vocabulary, sentence structure, format, size, clearness of print, and sharpness of pictorial detail. All of the readers can stand alone and serve as self-contained supplementary readers, as well as perform their special function as film readers. They can be obtained from the publishers or from Encyclopaedia Britannica Films as a part of complete units (films and readers).

Utilization

Patterns of utilization vary, especially where the films are owned by the school system. In the common pattern of procedure, the teacher first previews the film and/or consults the film guide in order to become familiar with the objectives of the film and the film's approach to achieving those objectives. Familiarity with the film enables the teacher to plan for its effective use (relating it to material already studied, explanation of new concepts to be developed, identification of things to look for, etc.).

Then the class is prepared for the film. The children learn the major purposes for seeing the film.

The film is then shown under satisfactory projection conditions.

Immediately after the showing, the teacher and class discuss the film and the objectives it was intended to serve. Discussing the film

experience not only reviews the experience and helps the children master the spoken words presented in the film, but permits the teacher to clarify any misunderstandings in meaning or pronunciation of narration and film content.

After the class has discussed the film, the film readers are distributed to the children, and it is explained that the books tell about the story in the film they have just seen and discussed. The teacher directs the attention of the children to the pictures in the book and points out (if the children do not) that the pictures are actually taken from the film they just saw. The teacher then explains that the printed words with each picture in the film reader tell practically the same story the film narrator told. The children may then take turns reading aloud.

After the story has been read aloud, a variety of follow-up activities can be developed. The children might answer questions on the content of the book, based either on oral or silent reading. The children may be called upon to read and answer the questions in the book. When it is apparent that the children can read the book with comprehension, they may be asked to use the newly learned words in sentences of their own. The film might be shown again without the sound, with the children narrating the film as it is being projected silently. The entire film-and-reader experience may be used to stimulate children to discuss their own experiences in the area covered by the film, to develop an experience story based on the film and reader, to draw or paint pictures about the film story, to motivate participation in dance and musical activities related to film content, to take a field trip, or to motivate other correlated activities.

The Value of the Film-Reader Experience

The value of these new tools for teaching reading seems readily apparent and easily

understood. The film provides a common experience and vocabulary for the entire class, and one which contains familiar concepts and words as well as new ones. Children who see the film and discuss it are familiar with and understand the vocabulary of the film narration and the pictorial content that it describes.

The correlation of an illustrated reader with a sound film permits a clear and direct association between the pictures and spoken words of the film and the pictures and printed words of the reader. The illustrated, correlated reader enables the pupils to transfer their film experiences into reading experiences.

The motion picture presentation of a story tends to be inherently interesting to children; it is a medium with which they have had experience (including television) and of which they approve. This interest is carried over into the illustrated reader which tells the same story. Interest is also reflected in a noticeable growth in the pupils' oral expression, an important gain in itself and a vital link in the reading chain. (Written expression is likewise often improved, by interest as well as because the children have more concrete experiences to write about).

The narrator's voice and delivery provide a good model for the pupils in their pronunciation and oral reading and a model which they may tend to imitate. The model of the narrator may help the pupils achieve a smoother oral reading performance, rather than the common word-by-word reading pattern so typical of beginning readers.

Because the readers tell the same story as the film, there is a four-fold exposure (seeing, hearing, telling, reading) to the vocabulary of the story via the media of film, discussion, and book, and to the concepts for which the vocabulary is the vehicle. This effective and integrated repetition in meaningful context helps develop the meaning of words quickly, and increases the speed and skill of contextual recognition of words. Appreciation of var-

ious meanings of an individual word and depth of understanding are likewise facilitated.

There is an important value present in the fact that pupils and teacher share the experience together. They can understand each other much better when they discuss and read about the experience. Because they have shared the experience together, misunderstanding in communication between them will be minimized.

The integrated use of the films and their correlated readers form an effective link between the desire to read and the act of reading. The child's mastery of reading is increased through his enjoyment of the reading experience and the association of the reading with actual experience. The film and reader combination develops the child's confidence in his reading ability and encourages him to attempt wider reading in a variety of materials.

Experience to date with the film-reader program has shown that all of the above values may be present and operate effectively for the great majority of pupils.¹ Slow learners are as enthusiastic over the integrated use of films and correlated readers as are bright pu-

¹For a report on the use of film readers in a Chicago elementary school, see "An Adventure With Film-Readers," by Harriet Gorman. *Educational Screen*, Vol. XXX (January, 1951), pp. 13-15. For a detailed report of an experiment with a film-reader program with second grade children in six Chicago schools, see "An Experiment With Films, Film-Readers, and the Magnetic Sound Track Projector," by Paul Witty and James P. Fitzwater, *Elementary English*, XXX, No. 4, (April 1953). pp. 232-241. A report of a film-reader demonstration with second-grade children in Greenfield, Massachusetts will be found in "The Place of the Film Reader in the Classroom," by Paul Witty and Chester W. Osgood, *The Instructor*, LXI, No. 1 (September, 1951), p. 38.

pils, and rapid progress has been made by all groups and all kinds of children. (An interesting experiment with Spanish-speaking children in the Southwest has shown that the film-reader program may be a valuable aid in learn-

Let one point be made clear: film readers are not being represented here as a panacea for all the problems in teaching reading. Film readers are not a substitute for basic readers nor for a variety of reading materials in a desire to speak English as well as in learning to read it!²

velopmental reading program. Film readers will not replace systematic instruction and drill in the fundamentals of word analysis, phonics, and the like.

Films and their correlated readers are represented here only as being new tools for teaching beginning reading, tools especially useful in providing common experience and vocabulary to a class of children in an interesting and understandable fashion. The integrated use of films and their correlated readers provides a new and effective way for helping young children make the connection between the abstract and the concrete, between the word and the thing it represents. The film-reader technique helps children put meaning into words and thereby enables them to get meaning out of words.

The film-reader technique stimulates a young child to read, enables him to read with understanding, and makes reading enjoyable and possible with less anguish and frustration than is often otherwise possible. Any technique that accomplishes all of these things deserves serious consideration and wider utilization.

²See "Downy Ducks Learn to Read," by Bette Newell Waltrip. *Educational Screen*, Vol. XXXII (November, 1953), pp. 392-4.

WALTER B. BARBE
AND
TINA S. WATERHOUSE

An Experimental Program in Reading

The developmental approach in teaching reading, while it is generally accepted as the "best" method, is difficult to put into practice. Meeting each child at his level, particularly in the upper elementary grades where there is frequently a range of from five to ten years in reading ability, is sometimes impossible. Another problem which is encountered in the developmental program is that many upper elementary teachers know little or nothing about teaching beginning reading, and therefore are unable to cope with the problems of their children who are reading at the primary grade levels.

The Problem

Recognizing the difficulties in teaching reading at the upper elementary school level, the teachers at Highland Park Elementary School decided to initiate an experimental reading program. The procedure was to group all children in the upper elementary grades by reading level for one period each day. It was the purpose of this study to determine the effectiveness of such a program in teaching reading.

Procedure

During October of the school year, each teacher rated the reading grade level of the children in her room. A standardized group reading test was administered. In addition to these ratings, each child was given an individual informal reading test by the staff of the local reading center.

With these three scores, the teachers met and placed each child in a group according to his reading level.

Children included in the program were fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. There are two classes at each grade level at Highland Park. This provided six teachers for the program and approximately 180 children.

Seventeen children were reading on the first and second grade level and so they were all assigned to one reading group. About thirty children were reading at third grade level and were assigned to another reading group. The fourth grade group, numbering about 70 in all, was split into two groups. About 35 children were reading at fifth grade level and were assigned to one group and about 30 were reading at sixth and above level and were assigned to another group.

Following this procedure, it was not necessary to hire any extra teachers. The regular upper elementary grade teachers were then assigned to teach the reading group at the level at which they felt themselves to be best prepared. One of the sixth grade teachers, having formerly been

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a primary teacher, was assigned to teach the children in the group reading at the first and second grade level.

This division provided for the grouping of upper elementary school children according to their reading level, irrespective of whether they were in the fourth, fifth or sixth grades. The group to which they were assigned, however, consisted of fourth, fifth and sixth graders who were all reading at the same level. The groups were called reading clubs. Most children changed to another teacher at the time of the club meeting. There were a few children who had their regular teacher, for she was the one who was teaching the reading club at that child's level.

The regular Lyons Carnahan Reading Series was introduced into the school. None of the children were familiar with the books. No mention was made of the grade level at which the children were working even though they could tell the level of the book in which they were reading. Teaching procedures outlined in the manuals were followed.

In November, soon after the program was started, the children in each group were given the Gates Reading Survey, Form I. In May, shortly before the end of school, when the children had been in the program for a six months period, the Gates Reading Survey, Form II, was administered.

Results

In Table 1 the results of testing in reading are presented. In addition to the results obtained by testing before and after the program began, less objective, but equally valuable, information was obtained from the experiment. Reaction to the program by parents, teachers, and children was overwhelmingly favorable. Since grades were not given for work in the reading clubs, no stigma was attached to reading from a book below one's grade level. The children particularly liked the idea of reading clubs, and several stated that they liked the idea of moving to another class "just like they do in junior high school."

The children in the lowest group received far more attention than they could possibly have received in a regular classroom. These children were proud of their success at their own level when they did not have to compete with children reading years ahead of them. Those in the highest reading group were far more enthusiastic about reading because of the absence of the traditional lock-step pace.

The teachers expressed the belief that more material could be covered more effectively when all of the children in the class were somewhat near the same reading level.

Table 1
Mean Scores on Gates Reading Tests at Beginning and End
of Experimental Reading Program

Actual Grade Placement	Mean Grade Level (Nov., 1953)	Mean Grade Level (May, 1954)	Increase Nov.-May
Grade IV (N=62)	3.9	4.8	+ .9
Grade V (N=56)	4.9	6.1	+1.2
Grade VI (N=51)	5.6	6.5	+ .9

Even though the period between testing was only six months, there was a mean increase of .9 of one year in grades IV and VI and of 1.2 years in Grade V. Actually, these data reveal only part of the success of the program, for no effort was made to see how much progress could be made. Instead, each child was taught at his level, and was allowed to progress at his own rate. The greatest amount of individual improvement was noticeable in those children in the groups working at the lower levels.

Some Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of the study was to determine if upper elementary school children could be better provided for in groups in which the children were all reading at the same level. The data collected clearly indicates that a great deal of progress can be made when children are grouped for reading instruction.

The implications of this study are:

(1) The traditional lack of attention to reading instruction at the upper elementary level can be partially overcome by grouping the children for one period each day at their actual reading level and instructing them from a textbook at that level.

(2) Opposition from parents, teachers, and children to grouping according to reading level can be avoided when

the program is clearly defined in terms of purpose and procedures. It is particularly necessary that the teachers themselves believe in such a program and be willing to exert the initial effort to make such a program a success.

(3) Teaching according to a developmental philosophy is more feasible when children are grouped according to reading level.

(4) Children do not object to reading materials below their actual grade placement, if they are not put in a class with children too far below their own grade placement.

(5) Where grouping is employed, more opportunity is available to provide an enriched reading program for children who are advanced in reading.

(6) The needs of children can more nearly be met when they are grouped according to reading ability.

While grouping within the regular classroom is accepted as an essential for teaching reading, there is much evidence that teachers in the upper elementary grades do not have sufficient time to give all the attention that is needed to each of the reading groups. By grouping the children by reading level at Highland Park School, it was found that it was possible to give more attention to reading and, at the same time, make the job of teaching reading easier for the teacher.

Four Feet per Lion

I took a ruler to the zoo
To measure Leo's head.
I fear I can't report results
Because, you see, I'm dead.

David Thorne, age 12, Paseo, Kansas City.
Taken from Spring, 1955, *Missouri's Youth Writes*. Published by the Missouri Association of Teachers of English.

THOMAS P. GLEASON

The School Reader Ninety Years Ago

During lunch period recently, "Merley" Camp, custodian to some five generations of our elementary school students, handed me an aged, musty volume entitled *The National Fourth Reader*.

"Dug this out of an old trunk in the attic," he grinned. "It used to belong to my father when he was in school back in 1866." As I am reading consultant in our suburban school, he thought I would be interested in comparing it with today's reading materials.

Opportunities for comparison were plentiful and after a first hasty glance into it, I found myself so engrossed that I spent that and many a succeeding noon hour studying its 400 pages, discovering its likenesses and unlikenesses to our texts of today and noting how many of our present educational developments had their beginnings here.

Somehow the unlikenesses seemed more apparent than the likenesses at first study. Reading instruction has substantially changed, along with everything else, in the last 90 years. The worn, plain cardboard cover, the antique type and format, in complete contrast to our brightly-colored, highly illustrated books of today, intrigued me. It also made me aware of how far we have progressed in pictorial presentation, use of color, and graded content material.

The very austerity of the book, filled with moralistic poems, essays, and stories, typified that era's approach to education and the harsh life that the reader had to face. Today, with things made easier for

the individual, our concern is to help the child adjust to family and community, and reading is one of the many aids used in doing so.

We are, no doubt of it, adjusting satisfactorily to the present-day world around us, yet in the process we may have lost something of value in the early reading instruction too.

For example, the roster of authors in the Fourth Reader of 1866 included Charles Dickens, Henry Ward Beecher, Washington Irving, and many others. Our children today do not lack for materials, most of them good, but part of them could not be called literature in any enduring sense.

The table of contents in the National Fourth Reader reads like an historical account of the first 75 years of our country's life. The last hours of Webster were set down by no less a public figure than Edward Everett, remembered chiefly today as the orator who preceded Lincoln on the speaker's platform at Gettysburg. "The Last Hours of J. Q. Adams" followed those of Webster, and this event is chronicled by William H. Seward, Lincoln's secretary of State, known chiefly for "Seward's Folly," a remote piece of real estate, purchased from Russia for 15 million dollars.

The critical events of those times are mirrored in the selection "The Flag Restored on Sumter," by that Yankee of note, Henry Ward Beecher, whose daughter,

Mr. Gleason is reading consultant in the schools of Wayzata, Minnesota.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, played no little part in having the flag lowered on Sumter some five years earlier. There are writers who were current in the texts of 1866 and have stood the test of time and readership to appear today in 1955 texts, men whose names and work need no introduction: Washington Irving, Oliver Wendell Holmes, William Cullen Bryant, Charles Dickens, and others.

No one will ever accuse the 19th century educator of skimping on significant content material. The children of that day had the opportunity to sample the work of many an outstanding political figure and literary personage.

It seems unlikely, though, that they understood their texts as well as our children understand the scientifically graded texts presented to them today. There can also be no doubt that the material was often morbid, and, to our eyes, unsuitable for children.

The following excerpt from the "Pauper's Drive" is one example of this material:

There's a grim one-horse hearse in a jolly round trot-
To the church-yard a pauper is going, I wot,
The road it is rough, and the hearse has no springs;
And hark to the dirge which the sad driver sings:
'Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns.'

Today our educational aims are more wholesome and constructive. As May Arbutnott says in *Children and Books*: "We must find books which help the child understand his own world today, and sometimes books that help him escape from today by going back to times that were

simpler and more understandable. We must find stories as realistic and homey as a loaf of bread and others as fantastic as a mirage. Above all, to balance the speed and confusions of our modern world, we need to find books which build strength and steadfastness, which develop faith in the essential decency and nobility of life, which give a feeling for the wonder and the goodness of the universe."

As the authors of the 1866 text, Parker and Watson, are quick to inform us in the preface: "The opportunities presented in this volume for the practice of all the characteristics of a good reader are many . . . and can not fail to inform the understanding, improve the taste, and cultivate the heart."

But different as the old and new texts are, it becomes evident that many of our present day educational developments were in an embryo stage in the last century: the study of phonetics, oral declamation (now less formal), graded schools, with the first graded series of readers to meet the needs of the new school system.

The mechanics of reading were far from being neglected in those days. The first 54 pages of the National Fourth Reader were devoted to Elocution, with its two sub-topics: Orthoepy and Expression. Orthoepy, obviously of Greek derivation, didn't register as familiar until I looked into Webster's *International*—and then the word became suddenly very familiar: Orthoepy: "the art of pronouncing words correctly"! Phonetics, under a different name and not at all a dead issue, judging from recent educational writings and PTA meetings.

The phonetic rules with their "apt and dynamic" examples are brought out

with the following "*Observations to Teachers*," a forerunner to today's *Teacher's Handbook*:

1. The children should be required to study carefully each reading lesson, acquiring a knowledge of the pronunciation and definitions of doubtful words, before attempting to read in the class.
2. In order to secure a natural and easy style of delivery, let them often commence with the last word in a paragraph and pronounce back to the first, before reading from left to right.
3. Reading aloud and recitation, when properly conducted, become very useful and invigorating muscular exercises. The instructor will require the students to stand or sit upright and easily, to use freely the diaphragm and abdominal muscles, as well as the muscles of the chest.

Reading aloud may well be an invigorating muscular exercise for those so inclined, to this day, but reading a paragraph from bottom to top and right to left for easy and natural delivery is a technique best left to the Chinese today, in our opinion.

In the 1866 text, orthoepy embraces articulation, syllabication, and accent, the authors inform us in Part I. One rather unusual footnote on the syllabication section, concerning "Initial Elements Prolonged," reads as follows:

On this point Dr. Rush mentions the error of a distinguished actor, who in order to give great force and distinctness to his articulation, dwelt on the initial letters, as marked in the following lines:

'Canst thou not m-inister to a m-ind
diseased,
Pl-uck from the m-emory a r-ooted
sorrow?'

"Such mouthing defeats its object," editorialized the indignant authors in a burst of feeling, rare in today's footnote.

That the author's fully believed in the all-embracing course in phonetics (orthoepy) is revealed in their closing statement on this subject. "Its thorough mastery will insure the correct and exact pronunciation of all words, used in speaking and reading, with as little effort of the mind as is usually employed in the art of walking."

Expression, the "utterance of thought, feeling, or passion with due significance or force," received a good deal more attention in the 1866 text than we are likely to give its 20th century counterpart, declamation, in the average public school program.

In the following lines, the dutiful fourth grade reader is admonished to "enter fully into the feelings of the writer and to cause others to see, feel and understand":

1. WHENCE and WHAT art thou,
execrable shape?
2. YOU injured my child—YOU sir!
3. His DISAPPOINTMENT, his AN-
GUISH, his DEATH, were caused
by your carelessness.
4. A good man loves HIMSELF too
well to LOSE an estate by gaming
and his NEIGHBOR too well to
WIN one.
5. None but the BRAVE, none but
the BRAVE, none but the BRAVE
deserve the fair.

Even today, could lines such as these, well rendered, fail to bring the PTA audience to its feet?

The general divisions of Expression, such as emphasis, inflection, etc., are familiar to all of us, but how many are acquainted with "personation," the "art of modulating or changing the voice, in

order to represent two or more persons as speaking?"

Following is an exercise in personation:

He: Speak mine own daughter with the sun-bright locks!
to what pale, banished region
wouldst thou roam?
She: Oh father, let us find our frozen
rocks!
Let's seek that country of all coun-
tries—Home!

Perhaps personation died a natural

classroom death when educators found that teaching children to read one part of a duet successfully was often a full-time job.

There are vast differences between the fourth reader of 1866 and one of 1955 and an examination of the two texts brings this home to us sharply. True, many of today's reading practices had their beginnings here, but a near-century of progress and research has altered them substantially.

DEVONA M. PRICE

Grammar Can Make Sense

To the Family:

It is an accepted fact that skill in *spoken* language develops readily; but skill in *writing* comes more slowly. Language growth follows this pattern:

- A child *listens* before he learns to speak.
- A child *speaks* before he learns to read.
- A child *reads* before he learns to write.

The above pattern of language growth is an important one to consider when skill in written expression is being developed.

Many students enter junior high school with the need to learn how to refine their written expression, especially as it relates to English, literature, or grammar.

This unit is designed:

- to develop a desire for doing a better job of "Putting It in Writing."
- to provide the kind of family group practice that will motivate the student of the family to proofread and refine all written expression.

To the Student:

Newspapers often run an offer like this:

BOYS AND GIRLS
Run a Want Ad
F R E E !

Think of something you have to trade or sell. How can you make use of an offer of this kind?

* * * * *

Mrs. Price is Director of Instruction in the Oak Park, Illinois, elementary schools.

Discuss how you would set up an advertisement to:

- offer your services
- sell something
- make a trade

* * * * *

Read these two advertisements that appeared in a newspaper recently:

Boy 15—Wash windows, walls, put up
storm windows, run errands after
school or Sat. B. Johnson, 4016 E.
Adams Ave., Gu 1-2613.

Boys wants job vicinity Bruce-Clark.
Delivering or any kind of job. M.
Rooney, 5201 N. Ashland. Fi 8 8026,
age 13.

* * * * *

Use the other side of this paper to write two ads offering your services. List in order:

- What you can do
- When you are available
- Where you can be reached

Pretend you have something to sell.

Write an ad here - - - - -

Describe the article.

- - - - -

Quote the price.

- - - - -

Indicate when and where a
buyer may see the article.

- - - - -

Check your ad for *price appeal*.

- - - - -

Check your ad for *reason for selling*

* * * * *

You may want to run an ad like this:

Electric Train, American Flyer Model,
many accessories. Good shape, sell whole
package for \$50.00. E. Jones, 1234 Park
Plaza, Ag 1-1031.

* * * * *

Or you may have something to sell, advertised like this:

Travler 3-Speed Phonograph, 12.00,
girls' ice and roller skates, size 5, \$2.00
each. L. White, Argyle Rd., Bl 4-6173.

* * * * *

Write an ad stating:

What you want to trade.

For what?

When and where the trade can be made.

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

Your ad

Compare your ad with the next two:

Girl 16 would like vocal or piano lessons
in trade for typing, clerical work, etc.
Connie Burdette, 2356 N. Erie, GU
4 8817.

Sell or trade football shoulder pads,
Jetoscope rotary printing press for
American Flyer train, John M. Bent,
361 N. Poplar, AR 3 6201.

* * * *

Advertisements are classified to help the reader. They can be

HELP WANTED

SWAP AND EXCHANGE

SITUATIONS WANTED

WANTED TO BUY

FOR SALE

Classify your ad. List other classifications that you have found:

* * * *

Read Silently:

SALES TRAINEES

6 above average young men
with sales ability, gd. grooming,
some coll. pf., to be
trained for mgmt.
Sal. \$425
Write CASTLE, 220 S. State.

List the abbreviations in this ad.

Abbreviations

Check your answers for the abbreviations:

yng.	— management
gd.	— salary
coll.	— South
pf.	— young
mgmt.	— good
sal.	— college
S.	— preferred

Most paid advertisements are short and to the point.

Why are words abbreviated? Omitted?

What experience have you had with rates for ads?

* * * * *

List situations or occasions

when you had to write:

Had to write:

- For information _____
- A letter of appreciation _____
- A report _____

* * * * *

Practice giving a talk that compares the style of writing needed for the situations you have listed with the style that is used in advertisements.

* * * * *

Did your talk include these points?

Most writing situations require

- correct spelling
- punctuation for meaning
- an arrangement of words that makes sense

Advertisements can have words omitted, words abbreviated and no sentences.

Groups of words arranged to make sense, form a sentence.

(or

A sentence — (tells something

(asks something

Explain why the following are sentences:

The weather report was telecast.

What temperature broke previous records?

Whatever you need, count on finding it here.

* * * * *

Read aloud:

If a sentence	tells
	or
	something
	asks

It must have 2 essential parts

- the subject
- the predicate

Use your dictionary. Find 3 words that mean the same as *essential*.

* * * * *

Write, in the blanks below, one of the words that you found:

A sentence must have two _____ parts.

These _____ parts are:

the subject
the predicate

* * * * *

Read and talk about this:

The subject of a sentence is the

- *Who*, that is talked about
- *What*, that is talked about
- *The one who is talking*

Find the subject of each one of these sentences by checking on the *who* or *what* that is talked about, or the *one who is talking*:

Dave sent for the catalog.

This training leads to various jobs.

He said, "Get the right plan."

* * * * *

Give examples of sentences.

Underline each subject and be able to explain.

* * * * *

Read orally:

The predicate of a sentence points out what is said about the subject.

Read: The weather report was telecast.

Complete: _____ is the subject.
_____ is the predicate.

* * * * *

Underline each predicate:

1. Advertising is a fascinating business.
2. Many people are engaged in it.
3. You may be interested in selling.

As you read the following orally, check for sentence sense:

What Type American Are You?

It takes a lot of different types of people to make America what it is. And it takes different types of blood to make a blood bank . . . each as important as the other . . . each needed desperately. Before the next 60 seconds have ticked away, four Americans will need blood to save their lives. Give blood today . . . and save a life tomorrow!

The above paragraph is an advertisement by the National Blood Program. Note the use of . . . used for emphasis.

* * * * *

Select two sentences from the above advertisement.

Draw one line under each subject; draw two lines under each predicate.

* * * * *

Now check your sentences. Does each one
 (tell something?
 (or
 (ask something?

Write each subject below in the proper place.

<i>Who</i> is talked about	<i>What</i> is talked about	<i>the one who</i> is talking
Write each subject <i>Here</i>		Write each predicate <i>Here</i>

Often the subject of a sentence is not stated. It is *understood* or taken for granted.

What word is taken for granted in each of these?

Answer the phone.
Report on time.
Save a life today.

Word taken for
granted or the
subject understood:
YOU

Write the predicates.

You can make sure of the subject in a question or interrogative sentence by changing the question into a statement.

Read orally:

What did you ask?
You did ask what.
Where is he going?
He is going where.
At what time does it begin?
It begins at what time.

* * * * *

Compose two interrogative sentences.

Change your interrogative sentences into statements.

If you make a perfect score on selecting the sentences from the following, you have learned how to proofread for sentences. Note that periods are placed after each example whether or not it is a sentence—*Don't* let that mislead you.

Place an S before each sentence:

- _____ Here's one gift that is really appreciated.
_____ It's all in a day's work.
_____ What did you say?
_____ Quick to see a good deal.
_____ Be on time.
_____ Vista Vision is here to stay.
_____ Buying a transistor soon.
_____ Placed an ad. in yesterday's paper.
_____ Mostly fair and little change in temperature.
_____ Guardsmen will begin convoy movements.
_____ The announcement broadcast by two correspondents.
_____ Happened for about the same period.
_____ Cool comfort all summer long.

* * * * *

Re-check. Write the sentences below:

THESE MADE SENSE

There were six sentences. Now go back. Select or supply each subject.

When you were proofreading the first sentence, "Here's one gift that is really appreciated," did you state it this way?

One gift, that is really appreciated, is here.

The subject, *the what that is being talked about*, is *gift*.

Student's Name _____
Date of Completion _____
Family Participants _____

Current English Forum

Edited by EDWARD L. ANDERSON

Recently the writer had referred to him a letter which a teacher had written to the publisher of an English handbook. On one page of the handbook the author had written, in giving directions for the writing of a research paper, the following sentence: "The student should avoid any grammatical usage which would be inappropriate for careful written English." The teacher addressed a letter to the publishers, criticizing the words, "careful written English" as ungrammatical, and asserting that the words should be "carefully written English." The teacher then proceeded to argue that "carefully written English" was the only correct expression because ". . . *written* is an adjective modifying the noun, *English*. One adjective cannot modify another adjective; only an adverb may properly do so. Therefore, *careful written English* is a gross grammatical error whose presence in a handbook is inexcusable. *Carefully written English* is the correct phrase, and I hope that the next edition of the book will be more grammatical than the current one."

The teacher in this instance may be said to be a victim of the frequently erroneous ideas about grammatical correctness to which a knowledge of the English language which is limited to the numerous oversimplifications and linguistic distortions of formal or traditional grammar is liable to lead one. The teacher's deduction from the rule he had learned was logically faultless; his conclusion was not correct as the sole guide to usage in this kind of case.

There are three ways of regarding the syntax of the words in question. One of them is the way that the teacher suggests, that is, to treat *English* alone as the noun, *careful* as a single adjective modifying *English*, and the notion in *careful* as an adverbial modifier of the

adjective *written*. On this view, "carefully written English" is a "correct" wording.

The use of an "adjective-noun" combination as a kind of compound noun is, however, well established and acceptable in formal and literary English. Otto Jespersen, George O. Curme, and other equally scholarly authorities offer in their major works such examples as *old man*, *stone house*, *young lady*, etc., and illustrate the punctuation of such substantives by examples like the following:

a tired old man
a pretty, dark young woman
a large, rambling stone house

Since "written English" is a phrase clearly used in a sense parallel to the established practice just illustrated, there does not seem to be any justifiable, prescriptive basis for insisting upon "carefully written English" as the only correct wording. In fact, this writer would prefer "careful written English" because it seems to him that "written English," "spoken English," "colloquial English," etc., have become well established as unified substantives. (Albert H. Marckwardt in the *Scribner Handbook* offers several examples. One of them is, "It has been based upon sound fundamental principles." John C. Hodges in the *Harbrace College Handbook* writes: "But note that a comma is not used between two adjectives when the second adjective is thought of as a part of the noun.

Right—a *keen* old man . . .

Right—a *quiet* dining room . . .

The third way of looking at the problem is to regard *careful* and *written* as separate, co-ordinate adjectives modifying the noun *English*, and to write ". . . careful, written English."

I believe ". . . careful written English" is the form most contemporary authorities would prefer, however.

The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS¹

Pay-as-you-see TV

The recent Roper poll of opinions concerning subscription television, conducted for the *Saturday Review*, found sharp differences in interpretation by the critics and rather positive opinions in the minds of the general public. Analyst Elmo Roper, writing in the December 31 issue of that magazine, concluded that the majority of the viewers was not in favor of the idea for the pay-as-you-see plan, while critic Gilbert Seldes, in an earlier issue, reported that viewers are dissatisfied with the programs as they now see. Seldes based his analysis on the same poll.

The Roper organization polled a cross-section of 504 adults, 449 of whom owned television sets, in Columbus, Ohio. Three situation-questions which painted contrasting pictures of television were put to the respondents.

The question of whether viewers like TV as it is or whether they would like to see changes made, had this result: satisfied, 70%; would like changes, 28%.

The second situation-question (a lengthy explanation which gave prices, method for paying, and possible costs) asked viewers if they would be interested in subscription television. It found that 27% were interested and 62% were not.

The third "question" presented a sample week's programs and asked viewers if they would want the service. Seventy per cent replied that they did not want it, while only 22% said that they did.

In his analysis in the *Saturday Review*, Mr. Roper breaks down the negative responses to question two, given by those who said they would not be interested in subscription television and who volunteered the reason for their lack of interest. In our opinion the responses

did not reveal a marked dissatisfaction with present programming. The reasons included the following: satisfied with present programs; don't watch or like enough; too expensive; prefer going out; don't like what would be offered; reception too poor; would soon have to pay for all programs; want to see all without paying; would cause disagreement and confusion in the home about what to see; and, is just another money-making scheme.

William A. Jenkins



Shipwreck reading

We find of interest, though not of importance, the lists of "the world's ten best books" which appear at frequent intervals. The latest, compiled by Broadcast Music, Inc. and selected by 150 authors, editors, and book reviewers, listed these ten as those that the judges would like to read on that mythical desert isle. The judges nominated 356 volumes; the Bible, Shakespeare, encyclopedias, and how-to-do-it books were ruled out of competition.

War and Peace by Leo Tolstoi

Abraham Lincoln by Carl Sandburg

The Oxford Book of English Verse

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon

Walden by Henry David Thoreau

Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes

The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

The Sherlock Holmes stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Golden Bough by James Gordon Frazer

Perhaps we should send out our own questionnaire, "If you were marooned in a classroom and had your choice of any ten educational

¹Wisconsin State College, Milwaukee.

books, which ten . . .?" And perhaps, even, "As an English teacher . . . which ten . . .?" We haven't the nerve, but it might be interesting.



Trashy comics decline

Sales of trashy comic books have declined in Milwaukee and in Wisconsin, according to the *Milwaukee Journal* for December 1. Along with this decline has been an increase in sales of comic books of high quality. The reports came from distributors and from drugstores, two of the many outlets for the books.

According to the *Journal*, sales by the six major publishers of comic books slumped an average of 18% from the 1953 level. Distributors say that they have not pushed the objectionable types, but that they feel that TV has diminished the interest in them as well as in all reading matter. Druggists, too, feel that children may have become "fed up" with the similarity of the issues; because of the opposition from church, parent-teacher, and similar organizations; and because druggists in the state in the last ten months have been trying to keep objectionable material off their racks.

Druggists weed out objectionable material as it is delivered, according to the *Journal* report, and return it to the supplier, sometimes as much as one-third of the consignment. They also remove from their racks items which cause complaints.

The druggists are kept posted on progress in handling only comic books carrying the seal of approval of the Comic Association of America. Not all are satisfied with their role. Some feel that undue attention has been focused on drugstores as retail outlets for comic books. Some point out that candy, tobacco, and variety stores, and bus, rail, and air terminals sell them, too. The center of attention, they feel, should be on the publisher who creates the comic books. Other strong feelings are that they do not have time to read every line of the copies

which distributors deliver, and that since it is a national problem, it is up to Congress to curb the nuisance.



Children's book club

The *Weekly Reader* Children's Book Club, which is now starting its third year of operation, is relatively new in the field of children's book clubs, but is already the largest book club of its kind, with more than 100,000 members. It was started as an additional service of *My Weekly Readers* to combat the inroads made on reading comics and TV. The other aim was to provide the best of current literature at a price within the means of most families. A year's membership, bringing a minimum of six hard-bound books, costs \$5. Books are issued five times during the year: December, February, May, September, and October. The December, 1955, selection was *The Living Desert* by Walt Disney; Simon and Schuster. The bonus selection was *The Rising Arrow* by Hughie Call; Viking Press.

For further information about the *Weekly Reader* Children's Book Club, write to Children's Book Club, Education Center, Columbus 16, Ohio.



Enrichment filmstrips

Enrichment Filmstrips, being distributed by Enrichment Materials (246 Fifth Avenue, New York 1), are a part of a program consisting of outstanding children's books, dramatic records, and the filmstrips.

The filmstrips are based on the famous Landmark Books published by Random House, Inc. These are books on outstanding events in American history. The series of six filmstrips in color complements the books and the records. They highlight scenes related to the events, and show our nation's development was affected by its past.

Titles of the Enrichment Filmstrips in the series are: *Paul Revere and the Minute Men*,

The Winter at Valley Forge, Our Independence and the Constitution, The Louisiana Purchase, The Lewis and Clark Expedition, and The California Gold Rush.

Each of the filmstrips is a full-length production, averaging 45 frames, and consists of lively and accurate full-color drawings. Accompanying each is a Teacher's Guide. The filmstrips cost \$6.50 each, or \$35 for the set of six. Write to Enrichment Materials, Inc., 246 Fifth Avenue, New York 1.



Good reading

The November issue of *School Life*, the White House Conference issue. Recent trends in the common school, legislation affecting education, miscellaneous facts and figures, the state and education, and, especially, school finances are taken up in this issue.

* * *

The December number of *The Reading Teacher*. The entire issue is devoted to "Phonics in Reading Instruction." F. Duane Lamkin's article, "An Analysis of Propaganda Techniques Used in *Why Johnny Can't Read*," may be of special interest. Mr. Lamkin uses the out-dated seven devices of propaganda analysis, but he develops convincingly the thesis that Mr. Flesch's presentation is unsound, that he failed to establish the validity of his idea, a responsibility every writer has to his readers.

The Reading Teacher is published by the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pa.

* * *

White House Conference on Education by Bice Clemow; a guest editorial in the *Saturday Review* for December 31. Mr. Clemow, well-known commentator on educational matters and publisher of the West Hartford (Conn.) *News*, reflects on the actions and decisions of the 1,800 delegates at the Conference in the most interesting and enlightening fashion of all of the reports which we have seen. As a lay delegate,

as one who took his turn serving as chairman at one of the 165 round tables, and as one who worked his way up to the "semifinal" table and helped advise the two writers of the final report, Mr. Clemow was johnny-on-the-spot. His insights into democracy in action which resulted in professional educators taking (deserved) leadership in the conference, the over-emphasis given to financial matters by the commercial press, and the mild friction within the delegation itself are crystally precise. He leaves the reader with the idea that the conference was a healthy thing. It will affect all levels of our educational system; its effects will be several years in maturing.

* * *

Ungraded Primary Classes by Robert H. Anderson, in *Understanding the Child*, XXIV (reprinted in *Education Digest* for November). Dr. Anderson presents a case for dropping the administrative labels of "first, second, and third grade," substituting a three-year course of study preceding the fourth grade from which pupils move on after two, three, or four years. Movement will depend on their rate of development. Basing his position on his experience with the plan in Park Forest, Illinois, and the success which the plan has met in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Mr. Anderson feels that this program is flexible, has fewer time limitations (all children do not undergo one year's growth in a chronological year), and has fewer crisis points at which difficult decisions or judgments about pupil promotion must be made.



Send for

Blue Book of Audio-Visual Materials, 30th edition. The *Blue Book*, actually the December issue of *Educational Screen* magazine, is complete descriptive listing of films, filmstrips, slides, and recordings announced in the magazine during 1955, plus many new materials. Price \$1. Order from *Educational Screen*, 164 E. Lake Street, Chicago 1.

* * *

Music for Children's Living, Bulletin No. 96 of the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth Street, NW, Washington 5, D. C.; 48 pp., \$.75. Six long articles which appeal to teachers to keep children enjoying music. The six discussions are: "The Place of Music in Our Lives" by Earluth Epting; "Music in Early Childhood" by Mary Jarman Nelson; "Music for the 6 to 9's" by Erma Hayden; "Music for the 9, 10, and 11 Year Olds" by Marion Jordalen; "I Can't Teach Music!" by Irene Schoepfle; and "Family's Music" by Barbara Finck.

* * *

Words Are Important, the Junior Book of Vocabulary Improvement, by H. C. Hardwick (C. S. Hammond and Company, New York 17, 63 pp.). A workbook which teaches and drills 216 words for pre-teenage students.



Paperbound club

The Paper Editions Book Club now publishes a magazine, three times a year. The club offers 1500 club selections, with a choice of one bonus book from 204 titles with every two-dollar order. It also serves as mailing center for 5000 other paperbound volumes.

Most of us have realized for some time the need the paperbound book has met in this country: bringing many ideas down from the ivory towers and outside the iron ring of intellectualism, while, unfortunately, often emphasizing the trite and trashy. In the foreword to the Autumn 1955 number, Lillian Smith point out another use for the paperbound book: filling a world-size need. By her experience during a recent trip to India, she illustrates how on the world level the paper book is meeting the need for enlightenment, quickly, conveniently, and inexpensively.

The Paper Editions Book Club magazine is free to members of the club. Write to 2233 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, Calif.



Junior Literary Guild

Here are the Junior Literary Guild selections for February:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:

On Beyond Zebra by Dr. Seuss. Random House, \$2.50.

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old:

Columbus by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. Doubleday, \$3.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years old:

The Shy Stegosaurus of Cricket Creek by Evelyn Sibley Lampman. Doubleday, \$2.75.

For girls 12 to 16 years old:

Penny's Acres by Mina Lewiton. David McKay, \$2.75.

For boys 12 to 16 years old:

Pirate Quest by Nancy Faulkner. Doubleday, \$2.75.



New language arts book

The Language Arts, the Child, and the Teacher by Zelma W. Baker (Fearon Publishers, 2450 Fillmore Street, San Francisco 15, Calif., 264 pp.) is a new text which may find use in student teaching, methods, or child psychology classes. It may also be helpful in in-service work.

Thirteen areas in Language Arts—speech, dramatics, poetry, handwriting, and so on—are taken up. Theoretical discussions are brief, with emphasis on how the child reacts in an integrated language arts program, and especially, what he says in such situations. His ideas were tape recorded or written down verbatim and the volume has numerous and varied communication insights of his personality, interests, and conceptual level.

Therein lies the value of the volume. Read as a book of theory it would be shallow. Read as an indication of expected verbal classroom behavior of kindergarten-primary children, either before the student teacher enters the classroom or to clarify her reactions after the children have been met, the book should be helpful. That is what Professor Baker intended.



May Hill Arbuthnot

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Edited by MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

Mrs. Arbuthnot is well-known as a writer and lecturer in the field of children's literature. She is the author of CHILDREN AND BOOKS (Scott, Foresman, 1947) and three anthologies, combined in the single volume, THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY (Scott, Foresman, 1953).

MARGARET MARY CLARK reviews books of science, social studies, and biography. Miss Clark is head of the Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library, and editor of ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS (National Council of Teachers of English, 1950).

From Jingles to Authentic Poetry
The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book. Assembled by Iona and Peter Opie. Additional illustrations by Joan Hassall. Oxford, 1955. \$4.50.

No doubt this collection of some 800 nursery rhymes grew out of Iona and Peter Opie's voluminous research volume, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*. This particular volume will delight adult students of Mother Goose rhymes and the individual child who can look at the pictures as his mother or father reads the verses to him. For the wealth of tiny black and white illustrations will not carry to a group of children. They have been taken from the chapbooks and toy books of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, supplemented with pictures in similar style by Joan Hassall. These have a simplicity and grace that will reward study and will cultivate the child's eye for beauty of line and mass. The jingles are well organized from the simple baby games, songs and lullabies to the more mature ballads. Grownups will appreciate the Introduction to the verses and the attractive format of the book.

Laughing Time. By William Jay Smith. Ill. by Juliet Kepes. Little, 1955. \$2.50. (4-).

"I like this book," said the King of Spain
"I think I'll read it through again."

So said this reviewer and reread it with great rejoicing. These are the cleverest nonsense ditties for the young child since Laura Richards turned her "Hurdy Gurdy." The title poem "Laughing Time," will set everyone to hee-heeing and ho-hoing. "Why" and "My Body" are good jokes. "Over and Under" and "Up the Hill" will bear many repetitions with some skipping on the side.

A cat named "Moon," "The Toaster," and "Jittery Jim," are sure to be favorites. These poems are for children, but when the grownups encounter "People" they are going to see themselves as "others," including children, see them.



Margaret Mary Clark



Laughing Time

Hour after hour,
In many places
People sit
Making faces.

Miss Kepes draws some wonderful face-makers as well as other delightful oddments and adornments of *Laughing Time*. Neither schools nor homes can afford to miss this unique contribution to cheerfulness.

Mouse Chorus. By Elizabeth Coatsworth. Ill. by Genevieve Vaughan-Jackson. Pantheon, 1955. \$2.00. (4-6).

For those who enjoy these abundant rodents *Mouse Chorus* will be a treat. The pictures are exquisite, both the landscapes and the beasties. The verses are not Elizabeth Coatsworth's best



Mouse Chorus

and some of them are saved only by the enchanting pictures. However, the rhymes are tuneful, and children who like mice will enjoy "Who Is So Pretty," "Winter," and others.

Humorous Poetry For Children. Edited by William Cole. Ill. by Ervine Metzl. World, 1955. \$3.50. (10-).

Mr. Cole has already edited a collection of humor from *Punch*, for the enjoyment of

grownups. Now, this anthology is his contribution to humor for children and youth. In spite of the title, most of the verses belong to high school and adult levels, but there are some choice bits for the children too. The verses are grouped by authors and the authors by alphabet,



Humorous Poetry For Children

from our old friend "Anon" to T. R. Ybarra. The collection contains all sorts of unusual verses not found in other anthologies, including some delightful samplings from Archie the cockroach. Variety and surprise characterize the selections and it is hard to see how we ever got along without this book. Don't let the teenagers shy away from the limitations of "For Children." Just explain that we are all children when it comes to witty verses.

A Diller a Dollar. Compiled by Lucille Morrison. Ill. by Marj Bauernschmidt. Crowell, 1955. \$2.50. (All ages).

Miss Morrison's riddle book, *Black Within and Red Without* was a delight. These "Rhymes and Sayings For the Ten O'Clock Scholar," have less literary charm but plenty of humor. They represent children's responses to schools —their taunts and jeers, jokes and jests, chants and cheers. They began in early Christian days and continue into modern Americana and teen age slang. The collection is a tribute to the

high spirits of childhood and its gift for and delight in derisive rhyming.



Imagination's Other Place

Imagination's Other Place. Poems of Science and Mathematics. Compiled by Helen Plotz. Ill. by Clare Leighton. Crowell, 1955. \$3.50. (12-).

It may astonish science-minded youth to discover a poem called "Atom From Atom" written by Emerson long before the days of A bombs. And a modern poet, Louise Townsend Nicholl, is moved to record in verse a possible Associated Press dispatch announcing that "Rays from the moon were heard throughout Great Britain" like "the tolling of large bells . . ." And another modern poet, Archibald McLeish, composes an "Epistle To Be Left In Earth" in case . . . ! These are only a few of the surprises to be found in this magnificent collection of poetry related to science and mathematics. There are some appropriate nonsense verses about flying saucers, wisdom from Job and tributes to Euclid and Einstein. If youth discovers first that witty limerick about "Relativity," he may go on to explore Dylan Thomas' "The Force That Through Green Fuse Drives the Flower." There are enough selections from the old poets to astonish us with their foresight, but a preponderance of the poems are from modern writers. This is one of the finest anthologies available for youth because it speaks to him in terms of the sciences he re-

spects and will, at the same time, stretch his imagination and his sense of beauty and values.

For Beginning Readers

Sandy and the Seventeen Balloons. By Jane Thayer. Ill. by Meg Wohlberg. Morrow, 1955. \$2.00. (4-8).

Sandy loved balloons, and a happy accident made him the proud possessor of seventeen of them. But to his surprise, they lifted him off his feet, and only a firm hold on his mother's hand kept him from floating ceilingwards in the big store. When, after many strange predicaments because of the balloons, his mother finally sneezes and lets go his hand, Sandy soars up and up over the heads of the astonished clerks until he touches the big dome in the

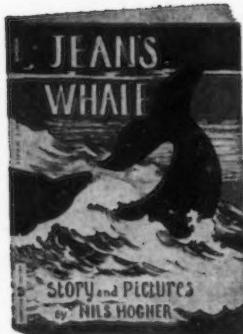


Sandy and the Seventeen Balloons

middle of the store. How he got down without breaking his neck is a solution that tickles the children. The pictures are as beguiling as the story which even the sevens can read for themselves.

Jean's Whale. Written and illustrated by Nils Hogner. Abelard, 1955. \$2.50. (5-8).

Stunning pictures in black, white and green with touches of red help to make this story of deep sea fishing a lively one. Just as Jean, the fisherman, set sail for the fishing grounds his wife calls from the wharf, "Bring me some cod to salt down, and a nice salmon for supper, . . . And perhaps a porpoise, so that we can sell it for oil." And her husband shouts back,



"Why not a whale?" He little dreamed that a poor day of fishing would come to a dangerous and wild conclusion with a huge whale in tow. It is an exciting adventure that Jean has to tell, once he is safely home. But with a whale on shore, prosperity is assured.

The Lovely Time. Written and illustrated by Audrey Chalmers. Viking, 1955. \$2.00. (4-7).

When Maw's kittens were old enough the mother cat always walked them firmly away from her house to new but desirable homes. All of her children had submitted until Sonny came along. He returned to the place of his birth and settled down with a determination that equalled Maw's. The old cat was outraged and took it out on her rebellious son by pushing him around and appropriating the best of everything. So it went until a dog chased Maw up a tree. She howled piteously and no one could get her down until Sonny went up after her, greeted her nose to nose and showed the silly female how to back down a tree. But that was not the end of the tale. Sonny gave Maw the surprise of her life once she was safely home. The illustrations add to the humor of this plausible, if improbable little story.

Pilgrim Thanksgiving. By Wilma Pitchford Hays. Ill. by Leonard Weisgard. Coward, 1955. \$2.50. (7-10).

This story of the first Thanksgiving will

make an excellent follow up to Alice Dalgliesh's *Thanksgiving Story*. For in this book we learn more details about the Hopkins family in the New World. Oceanus is a big, bouncing baby. Giles is enjoying the new adventures, but Damaris is abjectly afraid of Indians. Her only comfort is the little spaniel, which also came over on the Mayflower and is just as afraid of Indians as she is. When the great feast day comes and some ninety solemn Indians arrive, "Little Dog" takes refuge under Damaris' long skirts and they shiver together. But the feast, the prayers, and afterwards the parade of the colonists and the dances of the Indians break down Damaris' fear. Giles and an Indian boy make friends and exchange presents. It is a wonderful day, Damaris thinks, and gives thanks even for the Indians. Dramatic and beautiful pictures interpret tenderly a story that never grows old.



Pilgrim Thanksgiving

Two Notable Religious Books

First Graces. Pictures by Tasha Tudor. Oxford, 1955. \$1.75. (6-12).

Not since Quail Hawkins' *Little Book of Prayers and Graces* has there been so perfect a devotional book to put into small hands. Tiny and light to hold, the decorations and pictures in pastel colors have such grace and beauty



First Graces

that they will stimulate the spirit of wonder and praise. The short prayers of thanksgiving, dedication and blessings are well selected. Both the Protestant and Catholic editions of this small book will make satisfying introductions to the habit of prayer for children under ten.

The Child Jesus. By Florence Mary Fitch. Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. Lothrop, 1955. \$2.50. (6-8).

Miss Fitch shows the child Jesus living in a certain kind of a house, climbing hills, playing his pipes, helping Joseph with his tools and Mary with her work, taking part in the harvest and sleeping on his mat on the floor at night. His difference from other children is indicated by the fact that he learned early the commandment, "Love the Lord with all thy heart." Those words sang in his heart or on his lips in all he did. Even so, some will object that this is too humanistic a picture. If the story had carried the child Jesus through to his visit to the temple where he remained behind to talk with the wise men, the full measure of his difference from



other children could have been made more evident. However, Miss Fitch has built in a background and told the story as far as it goes, beautifully. Leonard Weisgard's pictures in rich colors are strong and impressive.

Science

Gray Squirrel. By Mary Adrian. Illustrated by Walter Ferguson. Holiday House, 1955. \$2.00. (8-10).



Gray Squirrel

It was a busy spring and summer for Gray Squirrel who raised two families before the winter day when the white weasel caught and killed her. Finding food, protecting her young from enemies, and moving them to less crowded

quarters, were all part of her busy life. This excellent factual material reads like a story, and the text is simple enough for third grade readers and can be used with over-age slow readers. The nature drawings in black-and-white and delicate color are excellent.

M. M. C.

Hurricanes and Twisters. By Robert Irving. Illustrated with drawings by Ruth Adler and with photographs. Knopf. \$2.50. 1955. (10 and up).

The headlined hurricanes of the past two years have aroused an unusual interest in the subject among children as well as adults. And this timely book describes some of the most devastating hurricanes of our own day as well as of the past. There is good scientific information explaining what causes them, how long they last, and what happens at the "eye." The most frequently asked question, "Where do they get their names?" receives careful attention. There are numerous photographs of both hurricanes and tornadoes, as well as excellent diagrams of their origin and paths. The Beaufort scale of Wind Force is included in an appendix and there is a comprehensive index.

M. M. C.

Discovering Nature The Year Round. Written and illustrated by Anne Marie Jauss. Aladdin. \$2.50. 1955. (10-13).

Here is an unusually planned and useful nature guide arranged by the months of the year. The plant life, animals, birds, and insects are described briefly for each month, and attention is called to certain changes or new developments characteristic of the period. There are many illustrations in black and white, which would be



Discovering Nature The Year Round

valuable aids to identification, and the author successfully conveys the changing backgrounds of the seasons from bleak winter landscapes to the warm greens of the spring and summer months in her larger pictures. A foreword explains that the timing of this nature guide is based on "the latitude of New York city, as the center of the eastern area," and that the size of the book prevented the inclusion of many plants and animals of the far South and West. Nevertheless, the book will serve a broad area, and its special arrangement will meet a long felt need.

M. M. C.

The First Mammals. Written and illustrated by William E. Scheele. World Publishing Company, 1955. \$4.95. (11 and up).

The Director of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has written a worthy successor to his *Prehistoric Animals*, (1954), in this recent book of mammals of the past sixty million years. Tracing them from early reptilian forms to their present development, each discussion of an animal is preceded by a summary of information on its type, pronunciation, and meaning of its name, period of existence, size, area where found, and where exhibited. In addition, the reader gains a good introductory background on the hunting and restoring of fossils, their distribution and classification. There are excellent charts of geologic time, and comparative size of mammals, as well as numerous diagrams showing the evolution of certain species. The author has not included men and apes in the text because "the story their evolution tells is best separated from that of other mammals." Profusely illustrated with fine black-and-white drawings, the book will appeal to science enthusiasts of all ages.

M. M. C.

The Golden Book of Astronomy. By Rose Wyler and Gerald Ames. Illustrated by John Polgreen. Simon Schuster, (A Giant Golden Book), 1955. \$3.95. (10 and up).

In a foreword to this absorbing introduction to astronomy, Bart. J. Bok, Professor of As-

tronomy at Harvard University, states that "Astronomy tells of things to amaze the greatest storytellers." And this book reads like a fascinating story as it tells of the stars, planets, asteroids, comets, meteors and nebulae. It explains the seasons, and night and day, and how man has learned to study the sky and its wonders. A final section of the book analyzes the problems of space travel which must be solved before scientists can reach other planets. All illustrations and diagrams are in color, which makes this a highly attractive book for both children and adults.

M. M. C.

All About Our Changing Rocks. By Anne Terry White. Illustrated by René Martin. Random House, 1955. \$1.95. (Allabout Books). (10-14).

Rock may be one of the commonest things in the world, but it is one of the most vital and essential. In a stimulating introduction to the



story of rock, the author emphasizes its usefulness and how the study of rocks developed into a science. Where rocks came from, the different kinds, their mineral content, and the way in which rocks have preserved the records of the past, are highlights of this simply written and provocative book which provides a popular and accurate approach to the subject. The large print, well spaced lines, and two-color illustrations used in the Allabout series add to the book's attractiveness.

M. M. C.

Best for pupils
Best for teachers

**WORD
POWER
THROUGH
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